A

VOYAGE

IN THE

INDIAN OCEAN AND TO BENGAL.

Vol. II.

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VOYAGE

IN THE

INDIAN OCEAN AND TO BENGAL,

Undertaken in the Years 1789 and 1790:

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SECHELLES ISLANDS AND TRINCOMALE;

The Character and Arts of the People of India;

WITH SOME REMARKABLE RELIGIOUS RITES

OF THE INHABITANTS OF BENGAL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A VOYAGE IN THE RED SEA;

INCLUDING

A DESCRIPTION OF MOCHA,

AND OF THE TRADE OF THE ARABS OF YEMEN;

WITH SOME PARTICULARS OF THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

L. DE GRANDPRÉ,

An Officer in the French Army.

WITH ENGRAVINGS, AND A VIEW OF THE CITADEL OF CALCUTTA.

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VOYAGE

IN THE

INDIAN OCEAN, &c.

THE governor-general of the english settlements, east of the Cape of Good Hope, resides at Calcutta. As there is no palace yet built for him, he lives in a house on the esplanade opposite the citadel. The house is handsome, but by no means equal to what it ought to be for a personage of so much importance. Many private individuals in the town have houses as good; and if the governor were disposed to any extraordinary luxury, he must curb his inclination for want of the necessary accommodation of room. The house of the governor of Pondicherry is much more magnificent.

As we enter the town, a very extensive square opens before us, with a large piece of water in the middle, for the public use. The pond has a grass-plot round it, and the whole is inclosed by a wall breast-high, with a railing on the top. The sides of this inclosure are each nearly five hundred yards in length. The square itself is com- posed of magnificent houses, which render Calcutta not only the handsomest town in Asia, but one of the finest in the world. One side of the square consists of a range of buildings occupied by persons in civil employments under the company, such as writers in the public offices. Part of the side towards the river is taken up by the old fort, which was the first citadel built by the English after their establish- ment in Bengal. It is an indifferent square, with extremely small bastions, that can mount at most but one gun, though the sides are pierced for two. The fort is without a ditch, and is no longer used for a fortification: the ramparts are converted into gardens, and on the bastions and in

the inside of the fort houses have been built for persons in the service of the government, particularly the officers of the custom-house, who transact their business there. These fortifications are so much reduced from the scale on which they were originally constructed, that the line of defence is now only a hundred and forty or a hundred and fifty yards in length, and the front not more than two hundred. Though this small fort was much superior to that which the English had built at first at Madras, it could not protect them from the resentment of the nabob of Bengal, Suraja Dowla, with whom they were at war: it was taken, and such of the english troops as escaped fled for safety to Cadjery, where also they were besieged. The conqueror, when he got possession of the fort at Calcutta, had the prisoners which he took there thrust one upon another into a hole, outside the fort, from which those only were fortunate enough to come out alive who happened to be uppermost in the heap; the rest were all suffocated. In

remembrance of so flagrant an act of barbarity, the English, who were conquerors in their turn, erected a monument between the old fort and the right wing of the building occupied by the civil officers of the company, on the very spot where the deed was committed. It is a pyramid, truncated at the top, and standing upon a square pedestal, having a design in sculpture on each of its sides, and an inscription in the english and moorish languages, describing the occasion on which it was erected. It is surrounded with an iron railing to prevent access to it, has shrubs planted about it, and exhibits a mournful appearance, not unsuitable to the event which it is intended to commemorate.

Monument.

Close to the old fort is the theatre, which does not accord in appearance with the general beauty of the town, and in which there are seldom dramatic representations, for want of performers.

There are two churches of the english establishment at Calcutta, one of which is built in a superb and regular style of archi tecture, with a circular range of pillars in front, of the doric order, and beautiful in their proportion; the cornice and architrave, ornamented with the triglyphs, are in the same excellent taste, and the edifice altogether is a model of grandeur and elegance. Calcutta.

There are also, besides these regular establishments, a catholic church belonging to the portuguese mission, another of the greek persuasion, in which the service is performed by monks of the order of St. Basil, an armenian conventicle, a synagogue, several mosques, and a great number of pagodas: so that nearly all the religions in the world are assembled in this capital.

The Black Town is to the north of Calcutta, and contiguous to it: it is extremely large; and its population, at the time of Black Town.

my last voyage, was computed at six hundred thousand Indians, women and children included.

Police.

So considerable a town ought to possess a vigilant police; but in this respect it is very defective. Those who disturb the public tranquillity are indeed apprehended, but the condition of the town itself is disgustingly unclean. Most of the streets have a small canal on each side, serving as a drain both for them and the houses, that could not otherwise be inhabited, on account of their dampness; for the Ganges, in the great swells, rises to the level of many of the streets, so that it is impossible to dig any where without finding water. These canals, which are a foot and half, and in some places two feet wide, and not more than three deep, are reservoirs of filth, that emit the most unwholesome exhalations. Such animals as die in the streets or in the houses are thrown into them, and they lie there and putrify. From want, sickness, or accident, many a

poor wretch of the human species also expires in the streets: I have seen an instance of this, where the body has remained two days without being taken away by the police. When this happens, the remains are thrown in like manner into the canals, and thus add to the putrefaction. The natives are sufficiently cleanly as to their persons and houses; but, having removed from the latter every thing which would occasion filth, they conceive themselves to have done all that is necessary. They leave even their ordure at the door or in the street, and, though they complain of the stench, will not give themselves the trouble to remove it.

These remains of men and animals, engendering putrefaction in the midst of the living, would eventually produce the plague, if the jackals, who sometimes traverse the streets by throngs in the night, howling dreadfully and devouring every thing in their way, did not prevent it. I have seen the body of a poor creature

lying dead at my door (the one I have just spoken of) serve two nights for food to some of these hungry animals. The first night they carried away the head and other parts of it. The body, without limbs, was rolling in the dust all the next day, and trodden upon indiscriminately by the men and beasts that passed, without any person having the humanity to remove it: the second night it was either entirely devoured or carried away, and I was relieved from so disgusting a spectacle.

Ravens. What is not consumed in this manner by the jackals remains for the ravens and eagles, with which the town abounds. They are seen on the houses, watching for every thing that is thrown into the streets, and they will drop without fear into the middle of a crowd to seize their prey. Great care is taken not to destroy them, as they contribute to the cleanliness of the town, and in that view are extremely useful. They are in general daring and voracious. I have seen a raven, in

the bazar called *territa*, seize upon a fish in the hands of an old negro woman who had just purchased it. I lived opposite this market-place, the neighbourhood of which was the resort of an immense number of eagles, attracted thither by the smell which arose from the place. One day my cook, coming across the yard with a roasted fowl, brought nothing to table but the dish; the fowl was in the talons of an eagle, that, having robbed him of it, flew with it to the top of the house and tranquilly feasted upon it before our eyes.

All the houses in India have *argamasse* roofs, that is to say, are flat, with a balustrade round them. It is there that the inhabitants in the morning and evening take the air. Some are ornamented with a circular range of pillars on the first story, making a sort of gallery, to which they retire when the heat of the day is over.

With respect to living, the fare is but indifferent at Calcutta. Provisions for the Provisions.

table are confined to butcher's meat, a fowl now and then, but little or no game, and scarcely a greater quantity of fish. Mutton is almost universally the preferable and standing dish.

Flies. In the summer a swarm of flies of every kind prevails, and is extremely tormenting. The muskitoes beset one so obstinately, are so easily provoked and so extremely insatiable, that too many precautions cannot be taken against them. To be secure from their attacks, it is the custom to wear within doors, if one stays any time, whether for meals or any other purpose, pasteboard round the legs. The most eager after flesh is the large blue fly, which settles upon the dishes and infects the meat, that is obliged on that account to be covered: it will contend with the guests for the victuals they are eating, and will follow the morsels as they convey them to their mouths. It is equally remarkable for thirst, and will throw itself into a goblet the moment any kind of

liquor is poured into it: to prevent this the goblet is covered with a silver lid made for the purpose. In short, these insects are insupportable; they realise every thing which Virgil has said of the harpies, and twenty times, by their persecution, have they driven me from the table.

To chase away the flies, and occasion a freer circulation of the air, many houses have a large fan hanging from the ceiling over the eating table, of a square form, and balanced on an axle fitted to the upper part of it. A servant, standing at one end of the room, puts it in motion by means of a cord which is fastened to it, in the same manner as he would ring a bell. Besides this, there is a servant behind the chair of each individual with another kind of fan, made of a branch of the palm-tree. The stalk serves for a handle, and the leaves, fastened together and cut into a round or square shape, give it the appearance of a flag. By these contrivances a little fresh air is procured.

Hooka.

It is chiefly in Bengal, where smoking after meals is customary, that the *hooka* is in use. Every *hooka-bredar* prepares separately that of his master in an adjoining apartment, and, entering all together with the dessert, they range them round the table. For half an hour there is a continued clamour, and nothing is distinctly heard but the cry of silence, till the noise subsides and the conversation assumes its usual tone. It is scarcely possible to see through the cloud of smoke which fills the apartment. The effect produced by these circumstances is whimsical enough to a stranger, and if he has not his hooka he will find himself in an awkward and unpleasant situation. The rage of smoking extends even to the ladies; and the highest compliment they can pay a man is to give him preference by smoking his hooka. In this case it is a point of politeness to take off the mouth-piece he is using, and substitute a fresh one, which he presents to the lady with his hooka, who soon returns it. This

compliment is not always of trivial importance; it sometimes signifies a great deal to a friend, and often still more to a husband. Tobacco forms but a small part of the ingredients that are burnt in this instrument: dried fruits, sugar, and other things are made use of, which, added to the rose-water with which the tube of the instrument is wetted, give a taste and fragrance to the smoke that are extremely agreeable; the smoke too, by passing through the water before it reaches the mouth, acquires a coolness that renders it still more pleasant.

Conveyance by the palanquin is in use at Bengal, as on the coast of the peninsula; but Calcutta, exclusively of this mode, abounds with all sorts of carriages, chariots, whiskies, and phaëtons, which occasion in the evening as great a bustle as in one of the principal towns of Europe. There are also a great number of saddle-horses, some of the persian breed, of exquisite beauty, but no Arabians, except

Equipages.

Horses.

a small sort called *pooni*, which are very much in vogue for phaëtons. All these animals are faulty; many of them vicious; for they are trusted to moorish grooms, who know indeed how to feed and fatten them, but who teach them at the same time the most incorrigible habits. A friend of mine having given me the free use of his stud, his moorish grooms, after following me one day to the public walk, as was usual, were so displeased with the quickness of my pace, that they determined not to be exposed to it again. I know not what they did to the horses, but I could never, subsequently to this period, make any of them go faster than a walk. Having a desire a few days afterwards to take a ride, I was scarcely out of the stable, and had the reins in my hand, when my horse began his capers. I applied the spur, and he was still more restive. I patted and coaxed him: it was of no use. I dismounted; I examined the bridle, the bit, and the curb; I even took it off, and replaced it myself:

I removed the saddle, to see that nothing improper had been put underneath; I inspected his tail and his shoes: every thing was right, and as it ought to be; and all this time the animal was perfectly quiet. I mounted him again, and he readily set off walking, without waiting to be told; but the moment I attempted to make him trot, he instantly recommenced his tricks. I then applied the spur unsparingly to his side; upon which, without advancing a step, he played such antics, that I thought he would have killed me. Yet this was the same horse I had rode two days before, and which had then shown in every respect the utmost gentleness and obedience. I resigned him to the Moor, who immediately led him in a canter to the stable. I shall make no comment on this singular incident, and should in vain be asked to explain it. I relate precisely what I saw, and no more. A similar circumstance occurred to me at Yanaon with a horse of Mr. Demars.

The English have begun to improve the breed of the Bengal horses: they have crossed the persian mares with english stallions, and, to excite emulation, have established races similar to those of New-

Races. market and Epsom. In 1794, I saw a horse that had been brought from England contend on the course with a most noble animal of the persian breed; but the english one conquered, and won, in two successive heats, every bet that was made, to the great joy of its countrymen, who cried in transport, " Old England for ever!" It should be observed, that this was only a week after the horse had been landed. Notwithstanding its confinement on board, and the fatigue of so long a voyage, it was still able to contend successfully with a fresh and well trained arabian: a proof that the english breed surpasses that of every other country in fleetness.

Though carriages are so numerous at Calcutta, they are never used for traveling. Almost all journeys are made by

water. Bengal is so intersected with rivers and canals, that you can go to any part of it in a boat. For this purpose the richer class of people make use of a conveyance called *bazarus*. Nothing can exceed the elegance and convenience of these little vessels. They have commodious apartments, like a house, and are followed by a large boat, containing a kitchen and its furniture, so that a person may travel in this country more pleasantly than in any other part of the world, and without experiencing greater fatigue, than if he were all the time in his own house. Bazaras.

A great many ships are built at Calcutta, and in the yards are several stocks well filled; but these vessels are very expensive. They are extremely solid, and are made of teak wood, which has the quality of rotting much more slowly than oak. Vessels which are built of it will accordingly last a very long time, if kept from running aground; for the wood is oily, which prevents it from decaying; Ship-building.

but being free from knots, it splits so easily, that a single stroke of an axe upon one end of a beam a foot thick will divide it quite through to the other end. Oak on the contrary is full of knots, which add to its power of resistance; but it is by no means so durable as teak.

Commerce. The privilege of the company is so great as to prevent any individual from trading to any part of Europe, or at least to England; but from one place to another in India the trade is free, and is very considerable both to China and elsewhere. The river Hougly is in consequence covered with vessels, which add to the opulence and industry of Calcutta. The wealth of this place is indeed extraordinary; silver money they will scarcely deign to mention; they reckon only by the *gulmohur*, a piece of gold of the value of sixteen rupees, or forty-two livres, estimating the piece-of-eight at five livres five sous. The Indians have the practice of clipping the coin, like the Jews in Europe, so that,

on receiving a sum of money, it is necessary to be provided with a *serraff*, who weighs and values the different pieces.

The money of the people is the *cowries* of the Maldive-Islands. The trade of Bengal is in the hands of the *sircars*, who are there what the *dobiches* are on the coast. These sircars are Bramins, who lose no part of their dignity or importance by becoming merchants. They are known by a string of cotton, of seven threads, which they wear next their skin, in the manner of a scarf, from right to left, and are assisted by clerks, who have the privilege of composing a separate cast, and look upon themselves as a division of that of the Bramins, subordinate indeed to the truth itself, but superior to all other casts.

Bramins.

Bengal is at present the true country of the Bramins. Their names terminate almost always in *ram*; a distinction of honour answering nearly to the French

de, the German *von,* or the *don* of the Spaniards, with this difference, that it follows the name instead of preceding it. The name of my sircar was Chissou; but, adding the final syllable of etiquette, he was called Chissouram. He was intelligent, honest, and, what is a very rare quality in a sircar, but little greedy after gain.

Opinion concerning the Bramins.

The ease with which these people learn any thing is wonderful: they all both speak and write the french, english, portuguese, moorish, malabar, and their own sacred language; which last no one understands that does not belong to their cast. Some modern authors, and particularly the English, have made us acquainted with passages of their sacred books, their *Veidam* and their *Ezourveidam;* and in the national library at Paris is a translation of the *Cormovedam.* I respect the profound knowledge of these authors; I pretend not to call their honour in question; but would rather believe,

since they affirm it, that the translations they give us are authentic, or at least that they think so themselves. I shall only remark, how much it is to be wished, that this sacred language of the Bramins were publicly known, that we may all be enabled to profit by the light which must result from an acquaintance with the annals of so ancient and so learned a people. I am far from wishing to throw doubts upon such supposed books of theirs as have been made known to us: my opinion, besides, would have but little weight against authorities so great; yet it appears to me, that whoever has been personally acquainted with the Bramins, and has studied their character and prejudices, must be struck with the unusual marks of confidence which the communication of such passages implies, and the inferences to which such confidence would lead. If a person thus acquainted with them were disposed to make objections as to these passages, he might say, "The Bramins are by no means communicative;

it is a point of their religion even, to conceal from all the world the knowledge of their language and their books. We must therefore suppose, that some of their chiefs, for they alone have the custody of the books and the law, have conquered the aversion they naturally entertained for foreign casts; have lost all remorse at so flagrant a renunciation of their precepts; and have chosen to risk their being excommunicated from their cast, which they value above life itself, rather than disoblige a stranger, who might have asked them for so important communications."

I am aware, that these writings are now matters of general notoriety; that the most celebrated authors are eager to propagate them: fragments of these sacred books are printed in almost every publication; travelers have even professed to have acquired a perfect knowledge of the sanscrit language at Bengal. All this is so common, that I ought to believe it, and I do so, though these Bramins are greatly under the influence of their religion, which

imposes a law upon them to conceal from us what we thus pretend to know; though a much lighter fault will subject them to the loss of their cast, a calamity which they will sacrifice every thing to avoid, or, when this has happened, to regain the privilege; though even when lost irrecoverably, the person so situated still remains invariably attached to it, and does not on that account the less completely despise all other casts; consequently, never endeavours to avenge himself by betraying his own: in short, though it were possible to believe, that, to get rid of the importunities of those who solicited them, they had entered into an agreement among themselves, to communicate merely indifferent circumstances, with the hope of being left quiet as to other matters, or had even invented what has been told us, for the express purpose of putting an end to the inquiries of Europeans, by pretending to satisfy us, and thus conceal more effectually all knowledge of their real mysteries,—in spite of all this, can I do other

than believe what has been told us by so many respectable authors? But let me be suffered once more to remark, that if the communications which the Bramins have made to us be true, they must have transgressed the laws of their religion; that if they have so far betrayed their trust, they must have lost that inviolable attachment to it, which for so many ages has maintained in them the most profound secresy upon the subject; that if the spirit of exclusion towards strangers be destroyed in them, the line of demarcation by which they were separated from the rest of the world must be destroyed; and, that if the secrets of their cast are unveiled, the respect which it has hitherto inspired will soon be lost and annihilated. Nothing is ever reverenced by the people but what is mysterious and concealed; and this is the foundation of the sacred opinion which is entertained of the Bramins: the moment they shall be known, the sentiment by which that opinion is maintained will be obliterated. This cast then, which mocks

the efforts of history to trace its origin, must quickly disappear: and the genius of revolution, which has lately changed the face of Europe, would seem destined to extend his influence through the universe, to destroy opinions regarded as sacred in the most distant parts of the globe, and to unveil a secret preserved inviolable through a succession of ages too great for the calculations of our chronology to reach.

The Bramins still pursue their studies at Benares, a town which maintains its celebrity on account of the learned who live there. The nabob of this country has entirely lost his power, and is now merely the humble servant of the english company. But even were Benares to be laid low by some conquering arm, the Bramins, amidst the din of war, which they have abjured, would not abandon their studies. During all the revolutions which the Mogul Empire experienced, all the convulsions by which Bengal was distracted

when invaded by mahometanism, these people, unchanged in their pursuits, their virtues, the mildness of their manners, and the secresy of their doctrines, stedfast in the persuasion of the superiority of their morals and their descent, never failed to obtain the admiration even of their victorious enemies, who, submitting to the universal veneration which they saw paid to them, have acknowledged their own inferiority. Thus in a manner superior to the accidents of the world and the revolutions of states, they have maintained a supremacy over the minds of every nation. Without the empire gained by arms, they possess that of opinion; and, isolated in the middle of the world, they have triumphed over time itself. And yet, with so high a degree of glory, the result of so much patience and virtue, we must suppose they would sacrifice this to satisfy the importunate curiosity of a few travellers, totally unknown to them, who had come from the remotest regions of the earth to inquire into their mysteries; that,

in direct violation of the essential precepts of their religion, they would discard, in favour of these foreigners, a silence rendered sacred by a series of ages, and reveal secrets which were the foundation of a superiority preserved and transmitted by their ancestors from the earliest periods of the world. What an instance of the instability of human affairs!

To conclude, if I have taken the liberty to hazard conjectures respecting the sacred volumes of the Bramins, let me repeat, that it is no part of my intention to raise doubts as to the authenticity of such translations as we possess. I have no proofs against them. If I had, the reputation of the authors would not deter me from saying to the world, "Do not give credit to those books; they are false." In the present case, I am so far from attempting to weaken the respect which is paid to them, that I have confined myself to reflexions on the general character of the Bramins, and the inconsistency which their com-

munications of this nature manifest: my conclusions evidently are less against the books themselves than against the cast.

Commerce. The trade of Calcutta is very extensive. It is through this channel that the company obtains the saltpetre, and all the muslins which we see in Europe; while it exports to this part spanish coins, gold thread, copper, lead, iron in bars and wrought, english manufactures of different sorts for the use of the Europeans there, wine and brandy, sea-salt, and marine stores of every kind. Individuals there obtain pepper and arrac from the coast of Malabar; raw silks, nankeens, porcelain, and tea from China, to which place they send in return the cotton of the Malabar coast. The grain of Bengal they export to every part of India, receive silks from Surat, send muslins and European commodities to Macao and the Philippine islands, and give circulation to all these articles in the whole interior of Asia. A commerce which extends to such a

variety of branches cannot fail to enrich those who cultivate it, and accordingly Calcutta is the richest town in India. Private merchants, however, are not the most wealthy class of those who reside there; the company's servants are much richer, and become so much more rapidly.

A young man who comes from London in the capacity of writer, without a single rupee in his pocket when he arrives, finds himself in four-and-twenty hours swimming in wealth. He is no sooner landed than the sircars offer him their purses, which he is not tardy in accepting, and immediately he has his palanquin, his horses, his servants, his cooks, and every accommodation. These Bramins are well aware that the stranger will soon be in possession of a good place, and in the course of a year or two (they will wait longer if necessary) will be able to repay them liberally. They urge him to expense, knowing that the deeper he is in

their debt the more tractable they shall find him. It is true, they risk the chance of his dying; but should he live they will be amply remunerated. In the course of a twelve-month the young man will be sent into the country, be invested with some office, such as assistant collector, and be intrusted with the receipt of a district. This is what the sircar was waiting for; he will follow his master in the exercise of his office, will procure without difficulty the management of the collection, and there is then no sort of extortion which he will scruple. Whatever place the young man may obtain, the sircar will contrive to be his agent, and to raise an immense fortune by the exactions that are in his power. But to conceal these disgraceful practices, which, if detected, might subject them to lose their cast, the Bramins pretend, that they are simply repaid, out of the salary of their master, the sums they have advanced; and this salary he resigns to them, reserving merely a sufficiency for his household expenses. This

game continues till the sircar is satisfied with the fortune he has amassed, when he takes leave of his master; or till the latter sees into the treachery of his conduct, is disgusted with it, and turns him away. The master then resorts himself to the same means, and thus completes his own fortune in two or three years; so that the people experience a change only of oppressors, without being relieved from the oppression. It should be observed, that the sircars of whom we are speaking form but a small part of the Bramins, and that the same character must not be supposed to extend to the learned, whose virtues are equal to their talents, and who would blush, even in their retirement, at the idea, not of a fair and honest course of trade, but of any practices in the smallest degree resembling those we have described. Yet, notwithstanding the corruption and knavery of these sircars, they are not the less unchangeably convinced of their own superiority to all other men, whom they

accordingly look upon with sovereign contempt.

Of the different descriptions of persons who acquire fortunes in the service of the company, the most numerous are the military; but they arrive at opulence much more slowly, and in a degree greatly inferior to the civil officers. The habit of living in the country, the customs to which they must submit, the manners they acquire, and other circumstances, render it necessary for them to settle themselves. Such as are called by their duty to stations at a great distance in the interior part of the country, and have no opportunity of enriching themselves, ally themselves by marriage to indian women of the moorish cast. As the children from these alliances have often no fortune, that of their father consisting merely of his commission, which is but a precarious inheritance, they are supported in that case by the english company, which has pro-

Marriages.

vided for the purpose an establishment at Calcutta that is honourable to human nature, where the legitimate issue, both male and female, of any of its servants, receive a suitable education, and are taught all the useful accomplishments: the boys are afterwards provided with situations according to their abilities and genius, and the girls settled in life, and sometimes even sent to Europe at the expense of the company, to finish their education. The good order and decency of this institution have obtained it the praise of all who have attended to it. The military officers stationed at Calcutta, or in the neighbourhood, sometimes intermarry with these girls, whose fathers it frequently happens they have been acquainted with. Such marriages are by no means uncommon; all who have acquired any fortune, whether civil officers or others, finding the necessity of a female companion to banish from their minds the remembrance of their country.

From a knowledge of this general predilection in favour of matrimony in India, the English, who are inclined to every sort of speculation, send thither annually whole cargoes of females, who are tolerably handsome, and are seldom six months in the country without getting husbands. These cargoes are impatiently expected by such as, not liking the orphans, are tired of celibacy, and the look-out for the arrival of the ships is as eager, as it is in other places for a freight of merchandise to make purchases of goods. What is more extraordinary, these marriages are in general happy. The women, removed from Europe from a situation of mediocrity, often of unhappiness, to a distant country, where they pass suddenly into a state of opulence, feel as they ought the sentiments of gratitude due to the men, who share with them their fortunes. They become both good wives and good mothers, and are therefore generally preferred to the natives, who are continually wishing for the lux-

uries in which they were brought up. These matrimonial ventures afford the means of keeping up the white race at Bengal, and prevent the portuguese cast from increasing so fast as on the coast. This cast is called here *topas*, from the word *topi*, which signifies in the portuguese language a hat. The name is given to such Indians as change their own for the european dress, and wear a hat instead of a turban.

The children that are the offspring of the english alliances with the women of India, are of no particular religion, though most inclined to that of England. Indeed they consider themselves as english altogether, and consequently as greatly superior in blood to the portuguese race. They are employed by the government in situations in the interior part of the country, at a distance from the capital, where they marry women of colour, and their children again become black, with an english family-name. This is true policy on the

part of the company, which, conscious that a population that is foreign to it must contain the seeds of its destruction, endeavours to people the country with a

Reflexions. race of its own. The power of the company depends for its support on a force which is not english: the company is sensible of this, but it is an evil which cannot be avoided: the hand of time can alone gradually furnish the remedy, by destroying the aversion of Europeans to marriages with women of colour. These marriages should be encouraged, as a generation would thereby be produced, which, descending from english blood, would feel towards England a national attachment.

Meanwhile, till this revolution takes place, the company is obliged to trust its safety to mercenary auxiliaries, and to put into their hands weapons, which, on the first discontent, they may turn against their masters. Fortunately for the company, the soldiers thus employed are of

the moorish cast; a cast that invaded and conquered the country shortly after the death of Mahomet, and has since entertained a perfect contempt for the natives who yielded to them, while these have retained on their part an inveterate hatred of their conquerors. The government turns this disagreement skilfully to its advantage, and endeavours to heighten it, for the purpose of governing and keeping the two parties in order, by the aid of each other. The Bramins alone would form a class, which, by having the good opinion of both, might be troublesome; but these have long forsaken their theocratical establishment, and are solely intent on extending among their own members the sciences, which they have incessantly cultivated, and the virtues by which they are distinguished.

England thus rules the country without opposition; but were the Indians and Moors to unite in a single point only, that of aversion to foreigners, her power

would soon be at an end. Reduced in that case to a dependence on her european forces, the contest she would have to sustain would be too unequal for any alternative to be expected, but that of defeat and submission. Such a catastrophe can never be brought about but by a hostile nation, possessing the necessary policy to plan the design, the patience and means to forward it in secrecy, and the power at the explosion to second and support it; and even that nation must entertain no hope of advantage to itself, since, being equally foreign, it would probably be included in the very proscription which it had contributed to foment.

If such a revolution, however, be practicable, the present government is at least doing every thing in its power to destroy the germ of it, by procuring a population of english origin, and thus diminish the possibility by augmenting its strength. Madras and Bombay command the whole of the peninsula, and the death of Tippoo has lately relieved the English from the

only adequate check upon their influence. The king of Trevancour and the nizam of Golconda, in complete submission to their will, guarantee their authority from Cape Comorin to the frontier of the state of the Mahrattas, a nation that has always been their faithful ally, and assisted them with its arms. Fort William puts the whole province of Bengal at their disposal; and the nabob of the adjoining provinces, Mouxoudabad, Benares, and Lucknow, bow to the sceptre of the merchants of London. The troops of these princes are commanded by english officers, which insures their fidelity to the company; and the mogul emperor has even offered his arms for the chains with which he will soon be loaded. Already an english detachment is stationed at Delhi, where it resides with its officer in the very palace of the emperor, and keeps guard over his person, pretending to do so for his safety, and to serve him as a guard of honour; while in fact it is a guard of spies, placed there to watch all his actions, to give an

account of them, and eventually it will not fail to reduce him to the same state of insignificance to which the other princes, his vassals, who have submitted to the ascendancy of european power, are subjected.

Government.

The english company has sovereign authority, and holds in its hands the reins of government. It nominates to all offices, imposes taxes, receives tributes, declares war and makes peace in its own name, and keeps up a land and sea force distinct from that of the king. Its navy consists of a couple of frigates, and two or three sloops, which are stationed at Bombay. The company has besides two or three merchant ships, which regularly make voyages to Europe like those which it freights; for the ships in general which the company employs in its trade do not belong to it, but are hired of private individuals. There is no privilege or exemption in this business, every one who has ships fit for the purpose being at liberty to

offer them. Those which are taken up for a single voyage only are called extra-ships, to distinguish them from such as are constantly employed, and which are called regular bottoms. These vessels are commanded by captains who take an oath of fidelity to the company, and who wear a blue uniform, with black velvet facings, embroidered with gold. A command of this nature is very expensive; to obtain it, as to a regular ship, three things are necessary; the consent of the company, that of the owner of the ship, and the resignation of the individual who had the previous command. The first two require only a compliance with the established forms, but the last is an affair of purchase. A captain is not removeable: to cashier him he must have committed some fault, and have been brought regularly to trial; and even then the accustomed price must be paid him by his successor, which is generally about three thousand pounds. When a ship becomes old and unfit for service, the captain obliges the owners to

Administration.

build him a new one immediately, that he may be freighted in his turn. The same is done when a vessel is wrecked or taken by an enemy.

Freightage. These ships are all built on nearly similar models, and should be pierced to carry at least six-and-twenty twelve-pounders on the gun-deck. Many are stronger, and in case of necessity can act offensively, and serve as frigates in the indian seas; but their guns are too low to be of the same use in wider oceans. When the governor-general wants them for any extraordinary service, he freights them for the time necessary; this is a distinct business, and is paid for separately from their common voyage.

These resources not being sufficient, they are augmented by some land and sea forces of the king of England. A part of the royal navy is always stationed in India, that of the company serving only for the narrow seas and against the pirates

of the coast of Malabar. Five or six regiments of the royal troops are in like manner kept in the different settlements: these add to the number of european forces in the pay of the company; for the king's troops in their service receive from them the same pay as their own. Besides this garrison, the king maintains a right of sovereignty over the territory of the company. The persons who reside there are amenable, as english subjects, to the tribunals of his majesty, and justice is administered in his name. All other acts of sovereignty are in the hands of the governor-general, assisted by his council; and it is from this supreme court that all orders relative to operations of government emanate. The orders from Europe, in every thing that belongs to commercial affairs, proceed from the court of directors; but points touching the sovereign government are under the direction of a board of control, the president of which is one of the king's minister's; so that by means of this board, his troops, and the local admi-

nistration of justice, the king is the true sovereign of India. The united company of merchants trading thither have only the title to flatter their vanity; the essence of the authority resides in his majesty, who allows them to dispose of their funds as they think proper, under certain restrictions however; for the opulence of this company affecting the public credit of the nation, it is necessary that its financial concerns should be subject to examination.

The government of Bengal either farms out its taxes, or puts them into some other train of management, as it thinks proper. They are collected in its name, and it appoints the judges for the interior parts of the country; a measure which is extremely obnoxious to the natives, who are thereby compelled to have recourse to foreigners for justice. In this department the greatest difficulty is to decide with equity between a European and an Indian, when the laws of the two nations differ.

Each party professes himself ignorant of the laws of the other, and the judge is sure to give offence to one of them, who complains accordingly, and excites a clamour against him.

In publishing my Voyage in the Indian Ocean and to Bengal, I have been desirous of exhibiting a picture of the true state of the Europeans in that part of the world, rather than of writing a course of botany, ornithology, or mineralogy. My intention was to furnish materials for historians, not for naturalists; I shall therefore give no nomenclature either of animals, birds, or the productions of the country; on those subjects there are already writers enough. I shall merely observe with regard to animals, that there are two sorts of oxen in India, the large and the small. The former resemble those in Europe; but there is another sort lower in stature, and which bear the same proportion to oxen in general, as the small hungarian horses do to the

Quadrupeds.

large english ones. Among this small kind there are some in particular that are accounted sacred, and are called bramin-oxen. I know not whether they are indebted for their form to the particular care that is taken of them, to a more delicate food, or to the easy life which they lead; but they have by no means the heavy sluggish air that characterises other animals of their species. On the contrary, they are light, slender, active, and have something graceful both in their shape and motions. They are a sort of *apis*, and are suffered to go at large among the people in the streets and market-places, and to take freely whatever they like. Any person in the bazar, from whom one of these oxen shall take a cabbage or other vegetable, will consider it as an instance of extraordinary good fortune, and all his family will rejoice with him at the event.

The sheep are in every respect like those in France, and do not at all resemble the african breed, which is a species

that I have no where else met with in any part of the world.

Elephants are common all over this province, and are trained to every sort of employment, even to hunting the tiger. It is customary to fasten on the back of this huge animal a pavilion, large enough to hold five or six persons, who ascend to it by a ladder, which is afterwards suspended to the crupper.

When a tiger is to be hunted, the persons who engage in the amusement get into this pavilion, and have several well-trained dogs that beat the country before them. The elephant follows the dogs till he gets scent of the tiger, which he does generally at a great distance, for his senses are extremely acute. Immediately he raises his trunk into the air like the mast of a ship, and seems anxious to keep it from being laid hold of by his enemy. On this signal the hunters prepare to fire, if it should be necessary.

Tiger-hunting.

The dogs in the mean time press upon the tiger, who no sooner perceives the elephant than he stands immovable, his mouth open and claws extended, roaring dreadfully, and watching every motion of the elephant with the greatest attention. The latter approaches within the length of his trunk, which he still keeps erect and out of danger: the two animals for a moment look at each other, and this is the time when the hunters usually fire. The shot makes the tiger start, on which the elephant seizes him, and dextrously lifting him up with his trunk, and letting him fall again, crushes him to death by treading upon him, and forces his entrails through the wounds. Whenever a tiger makes his appearance near any place that is inhabited, he is hunted in this manner; and the amusement is attended with so little danger, that the ladies are often of the party.

There are many species of monkeys at Bengal, but no orang-outang.

Among the birds of this province are the vulture and the eagle. This last is the small or speckled eagle, but the vulture is the large sort. There is also a great variety of paroquets, and one species in particular that is difficult to be kept; a circumstance to be lamented from the extraordinary beauty of its plumage. Its head is superb, being shaded with rose colour, gold, and azure; the beak too is of rose colour, and the rest of the body green *. There is also a charming little bird called bengali, with grey and red plumage mixed with white spots; and a large grey sparrow that can dive into the water and fetch its prey from the bottom, if the depth be not more than a foot: this is the more extraordinary, as nature does not appear to have destined this bird to swim, for it is not web-footed, and its feathers readily imbibe water.

* The name given to this bird by Edwards is the *rose-headed ring paroquet*. T.

Productions.

The productions of Bengal, taken generally, may be classed under two heads, those of the soil and those of industry.

In the number of the former is saltpetre, with which the land of this country is strongly impregnated. This does not require repeated washing to yield any quantity; a single operation is sufficient to obtain as much as the Indians want. Their laziness could not endure the frequent repetitions of that process which are necessary in Europe. Cotton is another production of the soil, from which those fine muslins are made which are brought to Europe.

Wheat is very sparingly cultivated here, but the country abounds in rice, which constitutes the principal nourishment of the people: the ground is uncommonly fruitful; there is no such thing known as a bad crop. As the country is low and flat, it is intersected and watered by a mul-

titude of canals, which are supplied by the Ganges, and contribute greatly to the fertility of the soil. This river overflows in the higher countries, and leaves, like the Nile, a sediment behind it, which the heat of the sun modifies and renders very productive. Bengal is the granary of rice to all India.

Vegetables of every sort thrive well, but fruit in general is good for nothing. With much pains some european fruit-trees are made to grow, but the fig is the only fruit that prospers, and even that is scarce. As to the fruits of the torrid zone, the latitude of the climate is too high, and the heat too moderate, to bring them to any perfection; the anana in particular is very bad.

The English have introduced into this province a new species of agriculture, in the cultivation of the sugar-cane. When I left Bengal in 1794, this undertaking had just begun to be tried, and it already

afforded a fair prospect of success. Messrs. Lambert and Ross were the first who engaged in the speculation. I visited their plantation, and had the pleasure of seeing that their fields looked well, were in good order, and the canes promising, though smaller than those of the Antilles; this disadvantage however is compensated by the quantity of juice they yield, which is owing to the peculiar quality of the soil in which they are planted. The only thing that dissatisfied me was, that a misplaced œconomy seemed to have presided in the establishment of the manufactories. The buildings were good, the coppers extensive, and the mill well executed, but it was worked by oxen, which have neither the strength nor the perseverance of the mules in the West Indies. These oxen are a degenerate kind of buffalo, and it is not without great trouble they can be rendered in any degree useful: the business of driving and whipping them is the hardest employment in the whole manufactory. This mode of work-

ing a mill appears to me a very ineligible contrivance; a water-mill certainly would be much more simple and preferable, and the Ganges is rapid enough to afford a fall of water that would set any wheel in motion.

At the period of which I speak, the natives were too little acquainted with a business of this kind to be capable of conducting it, and workmen were accordingly brought from China for the purpose: it is to be hoped however, that the Indians will learn in time to do without these men, and will no longer have recourse to foreigners, who are not to be obtained but at an expence that enhances the price of the sugar, which will prove of little ultimate advantage, unless it can be brought in price to bear some proportion in Europe to that of the West Indies.

In some provinces indigo is cultivated with considerable success; but though the plants are fine, all the indigo I saw was

of a very indifferent quality. This is owing perhaps to the manner of preparation; however, be the cause what it may, certainly that of the Isle of France is greatly superior. I saw at Calcutta the common blue indigo only, but none of the copper, or the flower, or the inflammable sort.

Among the productions of industry, ought principally to be mentioned the different kinds of muslins, some plain, others striped, and others again worked with gold, silver, and cotton, of which the finest are made at Dacca, a town in the northern part of the province, where there are many manufactories; to these must be added the doreas and terrindams, the different sorts of linen under the names of cossaes, nainsooks, gurrahs, ballasores, the chintzes of Patna, the carpets of Barampour, handkerchiefs and pieces of silk and of cotton.

The English have established manufactories for printed linens in the neighbour-

hood of Calcutta, that in no long time will totally ruin those manufactured by the natives of Patna, which are greatly inferior, and are besides less easily disposed of, on account of the distance of Patna from the capital. At Sirampoor, a danish colony, of which I shall speak hereafter, there was an excellent manufactory of this kind, belonging to Mr. Hamilton.

The Ganges, dispensing fertility in its progress, navigable throughout, and thus affording the means of commercial intercourse, has obtained the adoration of the inhabitants of its banks, from the innumerable benefits it continually bestows upon them, and has been worshipped as a divinity since the period when, according to tradition, madam Dourga plunged into it and disappeared. They relate, that this woman was their legislator, that in her old age she descended to the bottom of the Ganges, and that she still lives there. Accordingly the greatest happi-

ness of life is that of bathing in this river and drinking its waters, which have the virtue of purifying both body and soul.

Amidst the absurdities of this story, the wisdom of the legislator may be clearly perceived, who intended by the invention to enforce upon the natives the practice of frequent bathing, so necessary in a climate like this, to prevent cutaneous disorders and the various evils resulting from uncleanliness. It is in the same spirit that they are enjoined by a precept to abstain from animal food, and to live wholly upon vegetable diet; a precaution equally useful for the prevention of those putrid disorders, which would otherwise be inevitable, from the noisome vapours that prevail in a country almost wholly under water during a part of the year.

The story of madam Dourga has given rise to a superstition, to which many a poor creature has fallen a victim. It is believed that every one who is drowned in

the Ganges is destined to enjoy with this fair personage eternal happiness, and that it is by her contrivance and interposition that accidents of this kind happen. When a man therefore is in danger of drowning, instead of endeavouring to extricate him, the byestanders wish him every kind of pleasure, recommend themselves to his favour, and even, if necessary, forward the catastrophe, or at least are afraid of incurring the displeasure of their fair divinity by assisting him to get into a boat or reach the shore.

It is seldom, however, that they have occasion to carry so far their inhuman zeal towards any of their countrymen; for a native, who should fall into the water, persuading himself that he is going to the abode of eternal felicity, has no desire to escape from it by any exertions to save his life. It sometimes happens, that, in spite of themselves, the tide will drift them ashore; in this case they suppose the soul not deemed by madam Dourga

sufficiently pure to be admitted into her presence. The Europeans, however, who are little ambitious of the honour of visiting this lady, when by accident they fall into the river, endeavour to save themselves; and it is well they do, for the natives, exerting all their speed, fly instantly from the spot; and if the unfortunate being is unable to swim, it is all over with him; he can expect no assistance unless one of his countrymen should chance to be at hand.

Bathing in the Ganges.

The Indians bathe at least once a day, as the precept commands them. I have passed whole days in looking at them; men, women, and children bathe together without the smallest indecency. They leave their shoes on the bank, and sprinkle themselves as they go into the river: when they are up to the middle in water, they take off their apron *(pagne)* and wash it, perform the ablutions directed by their religion, put on their apron again, and come out. Often some Bramins come to

bathe, bringing with them a small brass vessel of the shape of a censer, in which are some grains about the size of a pea: these they throw one at a time into the river, uttering, in a low tone of voice, a prayer or two. They then sprinkle themselves slightly on the back, touch their temples with the first joint of their thumb, wash their apron, and retire. It is to be remarked, that the ceremony of washing the apron is observed by every individual; a proof that the precept was given for the purpose of cleanliness.

As to the ceremonies of the Bramins, such as throwing the grain into the river, the practice of enchantment to prevent the tigers from destroying the natives, the worship of madam Dourga, and other absurdities, these are points which we must not too hastily condemn. They are seemingly necessary to maintain among the people the prevailing superstition, while the more learned of the Bramins are supe-

rior to such mummery, and arrive, both in morals and mathematics, to the highest attainments. Besides, where is the religion that does not include some form, purposely contrived to impose on the multitude? Even we, who are happily instructed in the purest of all *, have we not our holy water, which is consecrated by breathing upon it and throwing in salt? Yet would it not be unjust to form an opinion of the religion itself from this instance of its practice? This, however, is the side on which it is attacked by those who would destroy it; and perhaps the natives of Bengal, at some future time, might employ the same means to overturn theirs, by ridiculing its forms, without attending to its substance, were not instruction wholly confined to the cast of the Bramins, and the rest of the nation in such deplorable ignorance as to be inca-

* The author being a Frenchman, was consequently a catholic. T.

pable of reflecting upon the reasonableness or absurdity of what they are directed to believe.

Worship of the Ganges.

It frequently happens, that the aged, when at the point of death, cause themselves to be brought to the edge of the river at the time of low water, and, being covered over with the mud by their friends, are left in this state to be overwhelmed by the tide when it returns, to the great edification of the people, who are persuaded, that they are about to be received into the mansions of the blessed.

Besides the ceremony of bathing, the Indians pay a regular worship to the Ganges. They make offerings to it of oil, cocoa, and flowers, which they expose on its banks, to be washed away by the stream. When they have a friend at sea, and would offer vows for his return, they light in the evening some small lamps, filled with oil of cocoa, and placing them in

earthen dishes, which they adorn with garlands, they commit them in the same manner to the stream: the river is sometimes covered with these lights. If the dish sinks speedily, it is a bad omen for the object of their vows; but they abandon themselves to the most pleasing hopes, if they can observe their lamp shining at a distance, and if it goes so far as to be at length out of sight without any accident happening to extinguish it, it is a sure token, that their friend will return in safety.

Madam Dourga.

This madam Dourga, who has deified the Ganges, is held in great veneration: her festival is celebrated every year in the month of October, and while it lasts nothing is known but rejoicing; the natives visit each other, and on three successive evenings assemble together for the adoration of their divinity. Her statue is placed in a small niche of clay, which is gilt and adorned with flowers, pieces of tinsel,

and other similar ornaments. The statue itself is dressed in the most magnificent attire they can procure, is about a foot high, and the niche with its appendages about three feet and half. All the rich celebrate a festival of this kind in their own houses, and are ambitious of displaying the greatest luxury, lighting up their apartments in the most splendid manner. Such as cannot afford to observe this solemnity at their own house, go to that of some neighbour: there is one of these celebrations at least in every quarter of the town, so that all the inhabitants have an opportunity of paying their devotions.

The room is furnished with seats for the guests, and the statue is placed on a small stage concealed by a curtain, as in our public theatres. The curtain being drawn up by the servants, a concert begins, in which the principal instrument is a sort of bag-pipe. The reed of this not being flexible, and the performer being

wholly ignorant how to modulate its tone, nothing can be less musical than the sound it produces, unless it be the tunes that are played upon it: the most vile and discordant clarionet is melody itself compared with this instrument, which would literally split the ears of any other audience. In the midst of this concert the pantomime is introduced, in which the personages of the scene, uncouthly dressed, and insupportably disgusting, from the rancid odour of the oil of cocoa, exhibit some ridiculous tricks, calculated to amuse the honest Indians, who laugh heartily and give themselves up to the most extravagant joy. For two days every kind of respect and adoration is paid to the idol; but on the third appearances alter. They abuse it, call it a whore, show their posteriors to it, and load it with curses and execrations: this done, they take it upon their shoulders and carry it to the banks of the Ganges, followed by the horrid din of the bag-pipe, where, reiterating their curses, they throw it into the water,

amidst the most frightful cries and howling, and leave it to its fate *.

It is not easy to discover the drift of this ceremony. The Bramin, who was my sircar, told me, that the festival of madam Dourga was instituted to perpetuate and honour her memory, retain the people in a devotion, which had for its object to give a character of sacredness to the Ganges, and thus enforce the precept, which enjoined the salutary practices of frequent ablution and bathing: but this lady not being the supreme deity, it was not amiss, he added, to conclude the ceremony with acts of insult, which would convince the people, that Brama alone was entitled to the unmixed and never-ceasing adoration of mankind. This explanation, though by no means satisfactory, was all the light I could obtain on so singular a practice.

* There are further details of this festival in Stavorinus, of which some are so humiliating to man, as to startle our belief. See his Voyages, translated by S. H. Wilcocke, Vol. I. page 418. T.

This is the only worship I ever knew that passed in its ceremonies from adoration to contempt and insult.

Jamsey.

The Moors celebrate also an annual festival, which they call *Jamsey*. I did not obtain any accurate information as to the nature of this ceremony, but it appeared to me to be of the mournful kind. A sort of funeral exhibition is carried through the streets, accompanied with banners resembling standards. There was a great concourse of people, and every individual had a stick in his hand, with a small flag at the end of it. They walked in ranks on the different sides of the street with great regularity. In the middle of the procession were some who performed feats of strength, and showed their activity by the most hazardous leaps, bawling out all the time as loud as they were able. As neither the period of this festival, nor that of madam Dourga, is determined by astronomical returns, they vary, and sometimes happen together: in that case, the government is

obliged to use the utmost vigilance and precaution, to prevent the most serious accidents. Whenever the processions meet, neither of them will give way to the other, and the ancient enmity of the two casts revives in all its rancour: the parties attack each other like furies; the remembrance of the ancient victories of the Mahometans rouses a courage and inspires a confidence on one side, which on the part of the Indians are equally supplied by enthusiasm, and they both fight with the most inveterate malice. Jamsey and madam Dourga are broken to pieces in the confusion, while their followers murder one another on their remains, and the battle is only terminated by the destruction or rout of one of the parties. A spirit of revenge produces a repetition of these battles on the following days, and it is impossible to foresee the length to which the massacres will extend, if the government does not possess an armed force sufficient to restrain the combatants.

Widows who burn themselves alive.

The inhuman custom of women burning themselves to death on the corpse of their husbands is not yet annihilated in India; but it is confined to the cast of the Bramins. When an individual of this cast dies, one of his wives is bound to exhibit this dreadful proof of her affection. This lamentable sacrifice is not imposed upon them by law, for they may refuse to make it; but in that case they lose their character, are held in dishonour, and are deprived of their cast, a misfortune so intolerable, that they prefer to it the alternative of being burnt alive. Nature however revolts in some of these widows, and it is probable, if left to themselves, that they would never consent to so cruel a sacrifice; but the old women and priests are incessantly importuning them, and representing, that after death the most exquisite happiness is their lot: as they are commonly young, it is no difficult matter to triumph over their weakness and irresolution; they accordingly submit to the

custom, and the prejudice which ordains it keeps its ground.

The manner in which this sacrifice is performed is different in different places. As practised at Bengal it is horrible. The funeral pile of the husband is erected near a wall, with just space enough between for a single person to pass, that the widow may walk, as is the custom, three times round it. A hole is made in the wall at the height of the pile, in which a beam, upwards of twenty feet long is placed, with a rope fastened to the end of it, and hanging to the ground, for the purpose of making it osculate.

When the widow has performed her ambulations, and taken off her jewels, which she distributes among her companions, she ascends the pile, and lies down, embracing the corpse of her husband. The beam is then put into motion, and falls upon her so heavily as to break her loins, or deprive her at least of the power

of moving. The pile is now set on fire, and the music striking up, contributes, with the shouts of the people, to drown the noise of her groans, and she is thus, in the full sense of the expression, burnt alive.

My servant, a very brave fellow, who had been discharged from the military service for the loss of a finger, and who disliked the Bramins, informed me one day, that a woman was going to be burnt at a place which he pointed out to me, on the left side of the river, between Fulta and Mayapoor. Having enquired into the circumstance, I learned, that she was both young and handsome, that she had already twice put off the ceremony, but that the day being a third time fixed, nothing could longer defer it. I conceived, that a woman who had twice hesitated, would find at least no great pleasure in submitting, and conjecturing, that she might not be sorry to escape altogether, I formed the resolution of endeavouring to save her. I asked my man if he would assist me,

which he readily agreed to, adding, that he had told it me with the hope of engaging me in the enterprise. He requested that one of his comrades might be of the party, who was a bold fellow and would be of great use to me; I commended his zeal, and accepted the proffered services of his friend.

I took with me twenty good european sailors, whom I put on board my sloop, in the bow of which I mounted a swivel: I provided also a dozen musquets, eight pistols, and a score of sabres. Two officers accompanied me, who were resolved to aid me to the utmost of their power. I encouraged the sailors by promising them the sixth part of the value of whatever jewels the woman should have about her, intending to leave the remainder for herself, if she did not choose to stay with me. My servant and his companion were without arms, as it was not my intention to employ them in fighting. I disposed my forces into three bodies, in the following manner. One of

the officers and eight men were to guard the boat. The other officer and six men were to follow me at a short distance with pistols, but to reserve their fire till I gave orders. Six of the most resolute I selected to attend me in the business; four of them armed with musquets, and two, who were to keep themselves close at my side, with pistols. The party who were left to guard the boat had musquets, and were to be in readiness to cover my retreat; besides his fire arms, every man had a sabre, and no one was to fire without express leave. Such was the arrangement of my force, and I had no doubt from the valour of my people, that my intentions would be admirably seconded. They had all seen some service, and would bravely stand before a veteran and experienced enemy, much more before men like the natives of this country. It was planned by my servant and his companion, that I should go up to the widow and touch her: this was a violation that would deprive her of her cast, and she would then have no right to

burn herself: at the same time they were to tell her in the moorish language, not to be frightened, but resign herself wholly to their direction, for that they came to rescue her. They were then to carry her off as expeditiously as possible, under the escort of the officer and party following me, while I and my six chosen sailors were to bear the brunt of the contest, that they might have time to reach the boat, to which I was to retreat when I supposed them safely arrived there.

I hoped, that men, unarmed and thus taken by surprise, seeing a body of Europeans with sabres and pistols, would not have the courage to attack us; but, being prepared to receive them if they did, I resolved to run the risk.

My intention was to leave the woman afterwards to her own disposal, that is to say, to give her the choice of either going with me, or of settling at Calcutta upon the produce of her jewels, which I should

of course have the precaution to bring away with her.

My whole plan was prepared and ready, and I set out to execute it. I arrived at the place, and alertly jumped ashore. The arrangements agreed upon were made with precision. I advanced, and was astonished at the stillness and silence that prevailed. I came to the spot. Alas! the dreadful sacrifice had been completed the preceding evening. I had been misinformed of the day. The wall was still warm, and the ashes were smoking. I returned with an oppression of heart that I can hardly express, and as much affected as if I had been a witness to the barbarous execution. My regret for this woman was as great as the pleasure I should have felt in saving her, and the idea I had formed of her youth and beauty.

Conjectures respecting Bengal.

It is to be wished, for the progress of our knowledge in the history of the globe, that the books of the Bramins, since it

appears that we know something of them, would instruct us as to the time when these people first made their appearance in Bengal; a province which at that period must have been one vast marsh, and which without doubt they drained by digging the Ganges, and other great canals, that serve to draw off the water, which would otherwise cover the whole face of the country. Such an epoch, if it could be ascertained, together with the little elevation of the soil in this province, would form a basis from which inferences might be drawn relative to the retreat of the ocean.

Till these lights shall be afforded us, we must suppose the province of Bengal to be of no remote antiquity. It is a vast plain, without a single mountain of granite; the little hills which are met with are merely hardened clay; and, except towards the northern extremity, not a stone, even of a calcareous description, is to be found.

If we were assured by tradition, that the

race of the Bramins are the true aborigines of the country, and that it has been inhabited from periods more remote than our chronology can trace, this fact would overthrow the system, not of the absolute retreat of the sea, but of its gradual and progressive retreat; for there are proofs so strong on the most elevated parts of the globe of such elevations having been formerly covered by the water, that it is impossible to resist their evidence. Accordingly Bengal, at some period or other, must have been in the same situation. This being admitted, the principles of hydrostatics will make it impossible to suppose this province to have been cleared of its waters prior to places of a more elevated position. If we consider its trifling height, when compared with the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Gates, and lastly the mountains of Thibet, which seem to rise proudly above it, we must suppose it to be a country in its infancy. The coast of Bengal is so low, that it cannot be seen at the distance of three leagues; a heavy sea would over-

flow it; and when the tide is unusually high, at the sizygies, the banks of the Ganges are under water. If I may offer the result of my own observations, Bengal is of the same age as the plain of India, which extends from the coast as far as the Gates, or perhaps a little more modern. This land is all on nearly the same level, and must consequently have been left by the ocean at nearly the same period.

If mountains of granite be the primitive matter which constituted our planet when it first began to contract its solidity, we may say with Pallas, wherever we meet with it: " this is one of the points most distant from the centre of the earth, for it is composed of a substance, which, formerly expansive in its fluid state, was projected by a centrifugal power." This substance therefore must be the most ancient of those which enter in its present state into the composition of the consolidated globe; since, at the period of the conflagration, it was the first that, con-

densing itself, yielded to the expansive force, which threw it from the centre to the surface. When I find myself therefore on a portion of the globe that has none of these appearances, I must conclude myself to be on a land of modern formation. If we descend from the summit of these mountains of granite or primitive matter to the plain of Bengal, which is scarcely above the level of the ocean, is subject to inundations, and does not afford a single specimen of any of the original substances of the globe, even those of a calcareous nature, which are evidently produced in the bosom of the sea, we shall be obliged to admit, that this low plain is nothing but the sands which the sea has quitted, and must be a country of very late date, when considered in relation to the past existence of the globe.

Indeed no part of this country bears any genuine stamp of antiquity. I do not call such the monuments of human construction, which are swept away in the

lapse of ages: I refer to characters imprinted upon those vast masses, raised by nature alone, and which the influence of time is insensibly changing. But where are we to look for vestiges like these in a plain, as yet scarcely solid, and that can in no part be dug without meeting the water, which lately covered, and has but just left its surface? The extraordinary fertility of this country evinces it to be of modern formation, and the retreat of the ocean is marked by irrefragable proofs. The Clive-islands have evidently been formed by the sea; the sand-banks called *Brasses* experience a slow but regula conformation, and will hereafter be converted into islands, when the Clive-islands will be joined to the continent. The bank called *Seareef* is a new bank, which the sea is adding to the others. Even the Ganges diminishes in depth; a circumstance that is not produced by the elevation of its bottom, for the violence of the current effectually prevents it, but by the water retiring to a lower level.

When the french company was first established in this country, ships of war of seventy-four guns came to Chandernagore; but afterwards they were obliged to stop at Mayapoor, and at present can reach no further than Cadjery, a small village at the mouth of the river.

The conclusion I would draw from these arguments is, that the Bramins are not sprung from Bengal, but have an origin much more ancient than the existence of that country. An old oral tradition affirms them to have come from the north: this tradition is accompanied with no proof, and corroborated by no authority, but is a presumption, notwithstanding, that gives weight to my conjecture.

It has been supposed, that the Ezourvedam, of which we have a translation, was composed a short time prior to the conquests of Alexander. I dare affirm, that this book was never written at Bengal; and should be bold enough, but for the

respect I bear to his memory, to doubt the assertions of a celebrated author*, who has said, that it was in the neighbourhood of the Ganges that mankind first assembled in society. He scruples not to allege as a proof of it, the extraordinary fertility of the country, which he supposes might determine its first inhabitants to settle there. But if its fertility in the early ages of the world had been so great, it is certain that it would long since have been exhausted, and the whole country at present be as destitute as the mountains, which were in like manner fertile heretofore, and served for the subsistence of the first race of men whom the ocean confined to their summits, that are now barren and naked.

The situation of Calcutta is such, that those who are in possession of it are masters of the whole river, to the prejudice of the other nations of Europe, whose settle-

* Voltaire: *Essai sur les Mœurs, &c.*

ments are all higher up in its course. Accordingly, were France to augment her military works at Chandernagore, so as even to render that fortress impregnable, she would find herself notwithstanding, from the first moment of hostilities, completely cut off from communication with the sea by the guns of Fort William, the fire of which crosses the river and commands the passage. As Chandernagore would thus be deprived of every kind of succour, it must fall, if its garrison were only able to act within the walls.

Bernagore. A little above Calcutta, on the same side of the river, is a small town called Bernagore, which belonged formerly to the Dutch, but was exchanged in the year 1790, and now forms a part of the english territory. It is celebrated only in the annals of debauchery.

From this place the european establishments upwards are on the left bank of

the river. The first is Sirampour, or Fredericnagore, a handsome danish colony, situated on a healthy spot of ground, and which wants only a greater share of commerce and opulence to render it a very agreeable residence. The inhabitants are fond of pleasure, and the governor, lieutenant colonel Obie, with whom I was acquainted, attracted to the town, by the politeness of his behaviour, and the entertainments he gave, a great many strangers. One of his daughters, who was married to count Shafaleski, gave an air of gaiety to the place: her assemblies were crowded; all descriptions of foreigners were admitted to them; there was dancing, and no one sought amusement in vain.

This little town is merely a factory, subject to the council of Trinquebar: it furnishes a few bales of goods to a couple of vessels belonging to the danish company, which come for them annually. It supplies also one or two private vessels,

which the privilege of the company does not exclude from this market. The commerce of the place is consequently very confined. Sirampour is almost wholly inhabited by emigrants from the other establishments, who fly thither as to an asylum under their misfortunes. The settlement belongs to the king, who keeps there a company of cipahis, as a sort of police. There is nothing worthy of attention in the town except the house of the governor. It is striking however by its elevation above the river, which renders it pleasant and healthy, and it has every where a clean and prepossessing appearance.

Opposite to this town, on the other bank of the river, the english company has a camp of ten thousand men, that furnishes Fort William with its garrison, which is relieved every month.

Garati. Proceeding upwards, we find on the same bank the palace of Garati, a solitary remnant of ancient french grandeur, and

which shows the scale on which the original plans of that people in Asia were projected. It is the finest building in India. The front towards the garden is in the taste which the Europeans have adopted in this part of the world, being ornamented with a peristyle of the ionic order, after the grecian manner. The inside of the palace is splendid, the hall spacious, and the ceiling and cornice are painted by the hand of a master. The front towards the court is entirely in the french taste, with no peristyle. It represents three buildings, each adorned with a pediment, in which are the cartouches for bas-reliefs, which have not been executed. The court is circular, and in a good taste, and the entrance is by an avenue, that opens majestically upon this beautiful edifice. Garati is the common residence of the french governor in Bengal. It has frequently fallen into the hands of the English, who have not always resigned it with a good grace, when the return of peace has brought back its right owners.

It has always however, sooner or later, been restored on such occasions to the party who were in possession before the commencement of hostilities.

Chandernagore.

A little higher, on the same side, is the small town of Chandernagore, the citadel of which is now only a heap of ruins. The houses, some half demolished, and the best in a state of decay, the streets dull and overgrown with grass, the air of neglect which every where appears along the walls, the breaches in some that are mouldering away, are so many tokens of the decline of the french power in Bengal. Yet formerly, under the government of Dupleix, this town was flourishing and opulent. The French, powerful and beloved, had the credit of rescuing the English when besieged at Cadjery, where they had been obliged to shelter themselves on escaping from Calcutta. Scarcely however were they thus restored to liberty, than, a re-inforcement arriving from Europe, with intelligence at the same time

of a declaration of war, they marched to Chandernagore, to attack the very men, who, two months before, had saved them from the fate of their companions, suffocated in the black hole at Calcutta, and to lay in ruins a citadel, of which the defenders, by a generous interference, had prevented their total expulsion from the country. The barbarian meanwhile, who put to death so many of their unfortunate countrymen, to whose memory a monument has been erected near the old fort at Calcutta, set them an example of true magnanimity, by letting the english fortress stand, after he had taken it, and even consenting to restore it. The French on the contrary had nothing restored to them by the English but ruins, which their ill destiny has not permitted them to repair. From that period, Chandernagore has continually languished, and now offers to the eye a mere scene of desolation. The town has a convent of monks, and a regular church provided with a minister, but they are both very poor

establishments. Previous to the french revolution, the vessels of that nation were used in considerable numbers to anchor at this place, which gave it a degree of animation; but the appearance of the first sparks of that political conflagration drove the French from the town, and their sircars followed them: the only two houses of any considerable trade which they had there escaped, one to Calcutta, and the other to Sirampour. The agent of the french company, abandoning the whole of his stores, also took refuge among the English, leaving Chandernagore without commerce, without money, and without employment.

The inhabitants of this small colony were still numerous, consisting chiefly of the crews of vessels, most of whom were deserters. Such of the white inhabitants as were not disaffected consisted of a dozen families, who had places under the government, and about two hundred aged seamen. A few revolutionary individuals

contriving to inflame the minds of these last, a man, whom fortune had elevated to the station of advocate to the king, distinguished himself on this occasion, and was particularly active. A small colony like this could have no revolution to effect, and had only to wait for directions from the mother-country and obey them. The alterations rendered necessary by the new order of things might have been made without disturbance or convulsion; but it did not so happen. Revolutionary proceedings were carried so far, that the governor, M. de M***, saw his authority despised, and was obliged to leave the place, and retire to Garati. The well-disposed inhabitants, who were leading families in the colony, followed him, thinking themselves in danger amidst two hundred madmen, led on by an individual equally artful and vehement, and whose least threat was that of throwing into the river whoever should render himself obnoxious to his party.

The governor, unfortunately, and the commanding-officer of the two companies of cipahis which composed the garrison, being on ill terms, did not on this occasion act in concert. The former, in consequence of this misunderstanding, not expecting to find the obedience necessary in a time of insurrection, and conceiving the armed force which should support his authority to be at variance with him, departed, in order to provide for his own safety.

The officer, however, seeing the governor, his chief, quit the place, forgot the disagreement that had prevailed between them, and, thinking himself bound to follow with the troops, retired also to Garati. The governor might easily have perceived, that by such a proceeding the officer had no idea of enmity; and, accordingly, had he marched instantly back, attended by the two companies, he might have entered the town in all his authority, and have re-

stored and maintained order, till he should have received instructions from Europe; but instead of taking any vigorous steps of this nature, he contented himself with making preparations for his defence, in case of attack. For this purpose, he procured two pieces of cannon, which he planted in the avenue, and encamped his troops at the gate of the palace. Lord Cornwallis made him an offer of a sufficient force to reduce Chandernagore; but M. de M***, in the true spirit of a frenchman, declined accepting it, wishing to owe no obligation of this sort to the natural enemies of his country. He feared the Greeks even when offering presents—*Danaos et dona ferentes.*

Two days after, the portuguese cast, forming a company among themselves, called *topas*, also repaired to the governor, who thus saw himself at the head of the loyal and most numerous part of the colony, in opposition to a handful of malcontents, who were besides in insurrection

without a cause; for no official intelligence had yet been received, and the governor was actually waiting for instructions from France. In this situation he refused to take any measure against the rebels, and remained in a state of inaction in his palace.

The revolutionists meanwhile were not tranquil spectators of this conduct on the part of the governor. Their first attention was directed to what has been called the sinews of war, and with this view they seized upon those sircars who had not had the precaution to make their escape, and exacted from them heavy contributions. These sums they applied to the raising a body of three hundred cipahis, which they recruited from the country around. A merchant, whose affairs were desperate, thinking thereby to retrieve himself, accepted the command: he was sure at least of subsistence for a time, and in reality this was all he obtained. A young officer of a trading vessel was lieutenant

under him. By plundering the company's magazines, they obtained clothing for this corps, and a quantity of Madeira wine, of which they drank a part, and sold the rest to furnish their treasury. They purchased some indifferent pieces of cannon, that had belonged to a merchant ship, and put themselves into a posture of defence. Finding that no one molested them, they suspected some snare, to guard against which they threw up some small entrenchments on the bank of the river, behind which they posted themselves, with the king's magazine in their rear, fortifying the whole with their paltry artillery. They called this their camp, and at night all their party were bound to repair to it. In the morning their leader harangued them, and they were dismissed till the afternoon, when they returned to their exercise. By the inactivity of the governor the storm was suffered to thicken, and the strength of the insurgents gradually increased, till, accustomed to insurrection, they at length

grew so familiar with it, that instead of considering themselves as criminal, the governor alone appeared so in their eyes. Meanwhile, five hundred men, united in an enterprise of sedition, were not a body to be despised, and M. de M*** was wholly unpardonable in allowing them to remain in this state of security.

Affairs were in this posture, when intelligence arrived, that the people of Paris had gone to Versailles for the king, and brought him to the capital, where they had determined he should reside. Upon this, the ci-devant advocate, and a surgeon, who had joined his party, exclaimed, that the inhabitants of the other part of the globe had set them an example, which it became them to follow, and that Paris and Chandernagore should have but one rule of conduct. They resolved therefore to march to Garati, and bring back the governor. This advice inflaming their minds, and some arrack they had drunk having mounted into their heads, it

was necessary to set out immediately, to quiet the clamours of the multitude. It was in the power of M. de M***, either to resist them with success, or to secure himself by flight: he however did neither, but suffered himself to be taken, without firing a shot, and to be brought as a prisoner into the town, where he ought to command. On his arrival, he was shut up in a dungeon, with all the officers of the garrison. With respect to the private individuals who had accompanied him in his retreat, they escaped to Sirampour, where they contemplated at a distance the first scenes of a tragedy, which happily terminated with a catastrophe less sanguinary than there was reason to apprehend.

As soon as lord Cornwallis was informed of these proceedings, he invested Chandernagore, and demanded that the governor should be given up. The insurgents had at least the quality of courage: they accordingly appeared at the barrier of their little camp with the matches lighted; and

the president of their committee declared to the english officer, that on the first shot fired against them they would put their prisoners to death and would never surrender while they had a man left to defend their entrenchments. The officer, who had not expected an answer of this kind, retired, and other means were resorted to for the deliverance of the captives.

The trial of the governor and his companions now commenced. The whole of this process was a striking example of mental dereliction and passion. It was necessary at length to pass sentence, which was the point most embarrassing of all. They would willingly have condemned the supposed culprits to death; but the French had not the power to carry a sentence like this into execution in Bengal without the approbation of the neighbouring nabob, whom they did not wish to offend. Influenced by this consideration, they determined to send them in

chains to the isle of France, whence it was hoped they would speedily be conveyed to Europe, with a character that would conduct them at once from the vessel to the scaffold. This was during the reign of Robespierre.

The pilot-brig, which they had in their possession, was equipped for this expedition, and the prisoners were put on board. This was precisely the moment lord Cornwallis waited for: he accordingly sent three armed brigs to chase the french brig, and bring it into Calcutta. The vessels at anchor in Port Diamond had also orders to intercept it in its passage.

In consequence of these measures, the governor and his companions in captivity obtained their release, and were brought in honour to the english settlements, where they remained for a considerable time. The inhabitants of Chandernagore continued in the same state of confusion:

some commissioners sent from Pondicherry for the purpose of re-establishing order and tranquillity being unable to effect it, lord Cornwallis left them to the consequences of their internal dissensions, till war was declared between the two nations, when he took possession of the place and dispersed them.

Chinsura. About a league above Chandernagore is the little town of Chinsura, the chief of the dutch settlements in Bengal. This place has been long condemned to inactivity, and offers nothing worthy of observation. Its exports do not exceed, at most, two cargoes a year, which are sent in boats to Fulta, where the ships stop. Here, as in all the dutch establishments, some malay families have settled, and given birth to a description of women called *mosses*, who are in high estimation for their beauty and talents. The race is now almost extinct, or is scattered through different parts of the country; for Chinsura, in its decline, had no longer sufficient

attraction to retain them, and at present a few only, and those with great difficulty, are here and there to be found.

On the same side of the river, at some distance above this colony, is Bandel, a small portuguese town, in a still worse condition than Chinsura, and which would scarcely have preserved even its name, but for the excellence of the cheese that is made there, and which is held in such request through the country, that it keeps up the remembrance of the town from which it is derived. Bandel.

After staying three months at Calcutta, I sold my vessel for a hundred thousand livres, and was happy at being relieved from the uneasiness I had continually felt respecting it, and the injury it was daily sustaining. I thought now of returning to the Isle of France, when an aid-de-camp of Mr. Conway arrived at Calcutta with a vessel, which he had purchased on Account of my Voyage.

credit, and did not well know what to do with. I was nearly in the same predicament with regard to my money, and was desirous of speculating in the article of grain, by making a venture to the coast of Malabar, then afflicted by a most dreadful famine. With this view I hired his vessel, which I freighted with three hundred tons of rice. A few days after I had concluded this bargain, he discharged the captain, and not readily meeting with another to suit him, he asked me to take the command of her myself. "If I engage a person in the ordinary way," said he, "he will deceive me like the one I have dismissed. If I select one in whom I can confide, I must do it at a very great expense, which I cannot afford. Take therefore yourself the command of the ship; you must go for the purpose of disposing of your cargo, and it can make little difference whether you go as captain or passenger." I consented, and began to prepare for my voyage. The first step I took was to discharge all the Lascars. The

blacks in the crew of my own vessel had tired me of this sort of sailors. I composed my crew of different Europeans, taking great care, however, to avoid such of the French as had lately arrived, for fear of disobedience or mutiny. I was fortunate enough to collect an excellent crew of thirty men, who proved of great service to me in situations which required resolution and fortitude. I know not why I should reason with myself against adopting the notion, certainly superstitious, that some ships are lucky, and others unlucky: this of mine was of the latter description. We changed its name, which was Cook, to that of the United Friends, and we embarked together to realise its new appellation. From the moment I ordered a man to the capstan, to that of my arriving at the Isle of France, I experienced every imaginable vexation: in short, this vessel ruined me.

On the day fixed for our departure we could not weigh the anchor; it was bu- Departure from Calcutta.

ried so deep, that all our efforts were ineffectual. My friend was averse to the idea of losing it; but in the chapter of anchors I was more deeply read than he was. I had lost seven in my former vessel; namely five at Calcutta, one at Pondicherry, and one at the Sechelles. At last I prevailed on him to go ashore and purchase another; and this done, I cut the cable. I proceeded down the river with a dutch pilot, who had the reputation of being skilful, and who gave us a proof of it, by running us upon a sand-bank opposite Fulta. We drifted with the tide, dragging an anchor, but with so little resistance as not to lose the power of managing the helm. The vessel striking abaft was thrown instantly athwart, but fortunately being flat-built, she did not quite capsize, though the heel was dreadful. It was then I had reason to rejoice at having a crew of Europeans. The boats of the country, that were helping us down the river, immediately rowed away, and, believing that we must inevitably

Running aground at Fulta.

perish, faithful to their religion, left us to the care of madam Dourga. That fair divinity, however, probably did not conceive us sufficiently pure to be admitted into her presence, and we escaped for this time the honour of drowning.

My pilot was so confused as to be incapable of acting, and, as he ceased to give orders, I took upon myself the management of the ship. I began by raising the anchor, upon which I was afraid, when the tide should return, of being drifted. I then placed an officer in every boat, with a brace of pistols, and gave orders for the first man to be shot through the head, who endeavoured to escape without my permission. I was preparing to shore up my vessel by the help of some top-masts till the coming-in of the flood, when she swung half-round, presenting her stern to the current. She was not however long in this situation, for the ebb being nearly run out, was prodigiously strong. She soon made another half-turn, and in this

instance came so suddenly about, that she cracked dreadfully in all her timbers: I feared she must have gone to pieces, but happily she still kept firm. I now felt the bottom, I thought, yield to the motion of the ship; a moment after she swung round again, her stern to the current, and I plainly perceived that we had shifted our station. The pilot-brig at anchor near us made a signal, that he was himself in deep water, and if I could move a little further I should get into the stream: in short, after another heel, my ship dragged along the bottom, and the tide placed us in the channel. We had touched, it seems, merely on a shifting sand, which had been unable to resist the force of the current, and the weight of the ship.

Departure from Bengal.

I anchored at Fulta, very apprehensive as to the consequences of this accident. I sounded the well carefully, but the vessel did not make water. Still however I could not but believe, that a shock so vio-

lent must have done some material injury, and my apprehensions proved in the sequel to have been well founded. I had the confidence in myself to undertake the voyage without insuring my cargo; but this accident rendering me more prudent, I immediately took the precaution. Being now at ease on this head, and finding in the course of some days, that the vessel did not leak, I put to sea, directing my course with the view of making the island of Ceylon, somewhere about the flats. I soon found my vessel to be no good sailer, and therefore kept on my guard against the effects of the tides. I set sail in the beginning of November, when the currents are rapid between Ceylon and the coast of India; and knowing this, I proceeded with caution when I came within their latitude. I was obliged to keep near the land, that I might distinguish the point I was desirous of making, while it was necessary to avoid going too close, for fear of a gulf. In consequence, when I supposed myself to have arrived near the

place, I was all night on the deck, observing the lead, and keeping constantly in thirty fathom water, aware that, while this was the case, I could run no risk, the strait containing only from seven fathoms to nine.

Refraction. At day-break I witnessed a most extraordinary phenomenon, produced by the clouds. It was calm, the land appeared exactly on the proper point of the horizon, the hills were visible, the plain at the foot of them, the shore, the trees, every thing was perfectly distinct. It was in vain that I referred to my soundings to determine our distance from the land; I could not refuse the evidence of my eyes. I sounded however again, and found still a great depth of water, though by the appearance of these objects it ought to be shallow. I was so strongly convinced that it was the coast of Ceylon, that I got ready an anchor. The illusion continued till ten o'clock, when, the wind springing up, it vanished, to the extreme astonish-

ment of every one, and especially of myself. I continued my route, making a small circuit towards the flats; but the currents were so rapid, that in four and twenty hours I found myself thirty leagues to the southward above my reckoning. All my endeavours to get in with the land were useless, and a sudden squall from the north-east assailing us so distressed my vessel, that the effects of her accident in the Ganges began to be visible by a small leak. The sea was extremely hollow, and from the effect of the tides very much broken. In the height of the squall, the mizen mast was carried away below the cap, which obliged us to unbend the mizen top-sail immediately. In doing this my best sailor fell overboard, and was never seen again; the waves ran so high, that he was swallowed up instantly. I hoisted out a boat, which in two minutes was stove against the ship's side, and it was by the greatest good fortune, that the sailors who were in it did not all perish: instead

Squall.

of one of my crew, I had nearly lost eight. I was compelled to leave the poor fellow to his fate, and the wreck of my boat to the waves, and be satisfied with regaining the seven, who had thus ventured their lives to save their comrade.

This squall greatly annoyed me, and rendered me very uneasy. I could not now regain my northing, and I was afraid, that in spite of myself I should be obliged to visit the Maldive islands, which was contrary to my plan. After continuing, however, three days in this state, the weather became moderate. In the first part of the storm I had lost a fore-top-sail; and as my owner, from his poverty, had furnished me with a very slender stock, I had none to replace it with: but the mizen top-sail being new, and of no use, now that the top-mast to which it belonged was gone, I substituted it in the place of that which I had lost, and in this condition was fortunate enough to gain Cape

Comorin: all my wishes were then confined to reaching Cochin, that I might repair my masts and rigging.

In passing opposite the coast of Trevancoor, I sent my boat ashore to get information. When it returned, it brought with it the figure of an idol, resembling a lingam or priapus, which some of the crew had taken out of a niche in a bank, where it was exposed to public adoration. The design was but too well executed, for it was as indecent as the assistance of sculpture could make it. I reprimanded the officer for permitting such a theft, of which I could not see the utility; but he alleged, that it was taken without his knowledge, to serve as a tiller to the rudder, that belonging to the boat having been lost: in fact, they had steered with this phallus, the size of which may be easily conjectured from the circumstance. I am ignorant whether the degree of veneration paid to this emblem by the Indians be in proportion to its magnitude.

Phallus.

Cochin.

In the afternoon of the next day but one, I anchored in the road of Cochin, and immediately got into a boat; but it was so far to the entrance of the river, that I did not arrive there till night. The cockswain of my boat pretended to be well acquainted with the place; but, notwithstanding his knowledge, he got me on a sand-bank, where the waves beat so strong, that we were twenty times on the point of overturning, or filling with water. The entrance of the river of Cochin has this inconvenience attending it, that when the wind blows fresh it raises a bar, which, taking the boats unawares, often endangers, and sometimes sinks them. I was more than an hour seeking in vain for the entrance of the river; at last, after frequent risks of drowning, I got from these waves, and had now to find a part of the coast where it was practicable to land, for it was too late to think of returning, in a road so distant, and with currents so strong. I ran my boat aground, and drew it upon

the beach; where leaving one of the crew to take care of it, I took the rest with me, and made towards the town. With my usual good fortune, I found the gate shut, and must have remained all night upon the sands, if I had not been told, that the harbour gate shutting a little later, if we were very expeditious we might still get in. We accordingly made all the haste we could, and arrived precisely in time. A passenger in my vessel, who came ashore with me, had a letter of recommendation to one of the inhabitants, which he delivered the same night, and was invited to take up his abode at the house of the person to whom it was addressed. For myself, I went to the inn, the master of which, when informed of the arrival of the passenger, sent to let him know, that his chamber was ready, and that a place would regularly be kept for him at table; leaving him, if he pleased, to reside with his friend, but acquainting him, that he would have the same sum to pay as if he lived at the inn; for that such was the *pri-*

vilege of his house, which was farmed to him by the government. This circumstance induced the passenger to resign the accommodation offered him by his friend, and take up his abode the next day at the inn. As for me, the innkeeper desired me to give him a list of what I should want, telling me at the same time, that he had provided for me a palanquin and servants. I observed, that having but a few days to stay at Cochin, and not intending to make any visits, I thought I could very well dispense with the carriage; to which he replied, that I was at liberty in this respect to follow my inclination, but I should find it charged in his account, for it was a part of his *privilege*. I was surprised at so extraordinary an instance of monopoly; but conceiving it to be the duty of a traveler not to oppose the customs of the country he is visiting, I submitted.

I found the regiment of Meuron in garrison in this town. It is a swiss regi-

ment, but was raised in France, and is composed of Frenchmen, many of whom came to offer me their services; and among them one in particular, who said he was a butcher, and who proposed to furnish me with such provisions and live stock as I might want at my departure. From the desire of encouraging a countryman I accepted his offer, and ordered several articles, which he promised me on terms more reasonable than I could get them of any one else. These I did not include in the list which I gave to the innkeeper; but the man was too well skilled in his trade not to perceive the deficiency, and he immediately concluded that I was supplied with them from some other quarter. He said nothing, but he watched so narrowly, that he was soon informed of the affair. In consequence, he employed his hirelings, who seized the whole of my purchases just as they were conveying on board. To get them out of his hands, I was obliged to pay him a duty, for this too was his *privilege*; so that eventually they

cost me more than if I had purchased them of himself. So extensive a *privilege* made me cautious and I was afraid of taking almost a single step, lest I should unfortunately encounter some new instance of it.

While I staid ashore, one of my crew deserted. Conceiving that I too had a *privilege,* that of claiming my sailor, I sent in pursuit of him; but here also I trenched upon a prerogative. I was taken before the fiscal, who reprimanded me, and gave me to understand, that it was the *privilege* of the hangman to apprehend deserters. I had no great difficulty in making him sensible, that, being a stranger in the country, and unacquainted with their customs, I was excusable in violating them; that, besides, I could have no idea of interfering with the functions of this grand executor of public justice. I was then asked for a description of my sailor, and two hours after he was brought to me by the officer in question.

Though these anecdotes may be thought too trifling to be inserted in a work of a serious nature, they may have their utility in showing how cautious we should be in our behaviour, if we would shun, in a foreign country, all occasions of offence.

Cochin is a dutch settlement on the coast of Malabar, and is their strongest station on the peninsula, since their loss of Negapatnam. I did not examine it sufficiently to be able to give an accurate description of it, but I supposed it to be in the form of a heptagon, the side next to the river included. The ramparts appeared to be extremely high, and very well fenced on the side of the land, and the ditch that surrounded them to be in a good condition. The dutch company always kept a strong garrison there.

This town has a separate government, so that the military commander is third only in authority. There is a civil governor, who is one of the company's offi-

cers; and under him is the fiscal, who holds the second rank, as in all the other dutch settlements.

Cochin is constructed on a good plan, but the buildings are bad. The governor resides in a house scarcely better than a barn, situated on a spot that has no embellishments, and is overgrown with grass, as the streets are likewise. All the houses are proportionably mean, and an air of wretchedness and inactivity reigns in this colony, as in the settlements in general of the dutch company in India. With a little exertion, however, Cochin might become a flourishing place: its commerce in the article of pepper might be rendered considerable, by holding out encouragements to merchants, and suppressing the vexations which foreigners experience on the part of the government. Its situation is admirable for the purpose, for it stands on a fine river, capable of admitting very large vessels. The water, at the flood, is never less than twenty feet deep, and the har-

bour is sufficiently extensive for any ships, however numerous, that might trade to it. A number of small rivers and canals run into it, which facilitate the inland communication to a great distance up the country, and would give extraordinary activity to commerce. Its position at the extremity of the peninsula renders it easy of approach in all seasons, and diminishes the danger to which navigation is exposed by the monsoon from the south-west: nothing but a fine day is necessary to enable vessels to get out, and even to reach Cape Comarin, from which there is a passage to any part of India. The teak wood, so excellent for the construction of vessels, abounds in this place, and many ships are accordingly built there; it is indeed the most considerable branch of industry that is at present carried on. These advantages, however, are all in a great measure neglected, and Cochin is in a state of deplorable languor, from which it will never recover, till the dutch company shall think proper to change their system, or the town

shall be fortunate enough to fall into the hands of some other nation, that may know how to value and turn to account the resources which it offers.

The inhabitants of this part of India are subject to a complaint in the legs, which is called by the names of elephantiasis and the cochin disease. The leg swells prodigiously, without either the thigh or the foot being affected: in this state it resembles considerably the leg of an elephant, and thence derives its former appellation. The disorder is probably occasioned by the quality of the water used by the inhabitants: there are persons also much afflicted with goîtres.

This country produces pepper, arrack, and cotton: we find likewise dried fruits and cardamoms; but the last two articles are chiefly brought thither by the Arabs. Cowries also may be procured, by bespeaking them in time; for the Maldives, where they are found, are at no great

distance, and in the fair season there are always boats from thence, with which we may treat for them.

The number of Europeans at Cochin, exclusively of the troops, does not exceed fifty; the portuguese cast amounts to about five hundred, and the rest of the population is indian. Though the town is extensive, and tolerably well filled with houses, it has the appearance of a desert. The temperature of the climate is the same as at Pondicherry, but the seasons are contrary; the mountains of the Gauts forming a barrier which separates summer and winter. The seasons are not subject in India to the same variations as in Europe.

The winds, with the exception of a few irregularities, by no means frequent, blow from two parts only of the horizon; from the quarter between north-north-east and east-north-east for six months, and the remainder of the year from south-

south-west, to west-south-west. The passing of the sun across the equator determines the alteration of season. The wind, while the sun is in the northern hemisphere, blows from the south-west quarter, and *vice versa*; the currents also are then reversed, and follow the direction of the wind. These seasons are called monsoons. During the prevalence of the south-west monsoon, the Gauts, intercepting the storms and clouds, prevent them from passing to the coast of Coromandel, where, the weather being then beautiful, the season called summer prevails. The coast of Malabar, on the contrary, is at that period subject to violent rains and squalls, and there they have what they call winter. The currents run in a southerly direction on the coast of Malabar, and on the other coast towards the north. Six months after the winds change to the north-east; and the mountains producing a similar effect on the contrary side, stop the rains and storms in their course, and detain them on the coast

Monsoons.

of Coromandel, and accordingly that of Malabar has summer in its turn. The currents then run in a southerly direction on the former coast, and towards the north on the latter.

By means of this certainty of the seasons, the most indifferent vessels accomplish their voyages without difficulty, by taking advantage of the winds and currents.

Departure from Cochin.

Not being able to sell my rice to my satisfaction at Cochin, I was on the point of proceeding with it as far as Surat, when a captain who had come from that coast assured me, that a scarcity no longer prevailed there, but that grain was very much wanted in Arabia, particularly at Mocha, where the famine, he said, was extreme, and I could not do better than go to that place, which would prove to me an excellent market. I have since found, that he told me this with a view to deceive me, and prevent me from going

to Surat, as he was himself purchasing a cargo of rice to carry thither: I believed his account, however, and immediately proceeded on my voyage.

In four and twenty hours I was in sight of the straits of Babel-mandel, which I cleared at seven o'clock in the evening;
Red Sea. and entering the Red Sea, I anchored the next day at Mocha, about thirteen leagues beyond the straits.

From the straits to Mocha, the navigation is perfectly safe along the coast, and there is good anchoring every-where: but the approach to the town is dangerous, and in entering the road care must be taken both to steer and to sound with exactness. Vessels should never go nearer than thirteen fathom water, on account of the sand-banks, and should then keep to the north till the front of the town is in view, or the dome of the great mosque bearing east south-east. They may then proceed in safety to the anchorage, where

they will have six or seven fathoms, in a sandy bottom. The north fort lies between north-east-by-east, and north-east-by-north, within about half-gun shot of a twelve pounder. There is another channel near the south fort, frequented by small vessels; but I would not recommend it, unless to those who are thoroughly acquainted with it: a vessel must moor with the best bower to the south, on account of the squalls, which in that quarter are very violent. The sea however is calm during their prevalence, being inclosed by the sands and reefs which shelter the road, while the sky, though the sun shines intensely hot, has every appearance of a hurricane.

When the monsoon is settled, the period of which is from the latter end of November to the beginning of June, the wind, blowing from the south and south-south-east, comes charged with all the vapours of Abyssinia, and brings with it even the sand of that country. In conse-

quence, the atmosphere seems inflamed, the sky looks red, nothing scarcely is to be seen at the distance of a league; and the burning sand carried along by the wind every-where scorches the vegetation. It is customary at Mocha to cultivate a great quantity of basil plants, with which the inhabitants decorate their apartments and windows; but these must be removed at the commencement of the southerly monsoon, or they would otherwise be killed, not only by the sand, which would destroy them, but also by the wind, the heat of which is sometimes insupportable. All communication with vessels in the road is then interrupted.

A wind from the south lasts generally one, and sometimes two quadratures: but at the new and full moon it is commonly succeeded, for the space of three days, by a northerly wind, which cools the air, and purifies the atmosphere.

Mocha.

The road of Mocha is of a circular

form, describing an arc, of which the chord is the anchorage: the two extremities of this chord are defended by the forts I have mentioned. The small vessels of the country anchor near the shore, by a handsome pier, built for the convenience of loading and unloading. The seasons for entering and quitting the Red Sea are determined by the change of the monsoons, which do not, as in India, depend upon the equinoxes. The last days of November, or the beginning of December, bring the southerly monsoon; and from that period the currents set into the straits of Babel-mandel with a prodigious rapidity, till the commencement of June, when the wind veering to the north or north-north-west, they run in a southerly direction*. In the northerly

* This is confirmed by D'Apres de Manevilette. See the Neptune Oriental. This work is the result of the observations of the best navigators, and should be taken as authority, disregarding the reports of some modern travellers.

While the winds blow thus in the Red Sea, they

monsoon, the vessels coming to Mocha cannot make the road on account of the violence of the wind, and are obliged to go to a neighbouring bay to anchor, which however they can leave in the intervals in which the north wind prevails. During the whole of this monsoon, those which are in the Red Sea must remain there, no vessels being able to surmount the united force of the wind and the current.

The pilgrims going to Mecca from different parts of India take advantage of this season. Whole ship-loads of these religionists often arrive, influenced, many of them, by motives of trade, interest, and a desire of pillage, more than by devo-

vary in the gulf outside the straits; that is, as a general rule, they blow from the east between November and June, and during the other six months from the west: ſo that from November to June the wind is east in the gulf, and south-south-east in the Red Sea: and afterwards for six months west in the gulf, and north-north-west in the Red Sea.

tion. Nothing can equal the disorder which they occasion in the caravansaries and other places. The inhabitants therefore are eager to furnish them with whatever they want, that they may set off for Jedda, whence they proceed to Mecca.

While I was at Mocha, an unfortunate english captain fell a victim to their wickedness. Several of them had missed their vessel in returning, either purposely, or that their moorish or foreign captain would carry them no further, or that the crime which they afterwards committed was a preconceived plan. They were twenty in number, and they waited on captain Nun, who commanded a vessel of the sort called *grab*, to ask for a passage to Bengal. As he was returning to Calcutta, after a profitable voyage, he desired nothing better than to serve these men, whom he could not well suspect of any evil design. The terms were soon agreed upon, and the article of provision was as readily adjusted; for his crew being Lascars, and consequently

Murder of captain Nun.

Musselmans, what he had provided for them would serve also for the passengers. He sailed and cleared the straits; but the vessel had no sooner doubled Socotora, than these miscreants rushed upon the few Europeans, five or six in number, who had the direction of the vessel, and murdered them all, beginning with the captain. Some of the Lascars, who attempted to oppose them, were also killed, while others got up into the tops, and put themselves into a posture of defence. A capitulation took place, and they were offered their lives, if they would come down and assist to conduct the vessel to any port, no matter where. They agreed, and for some days tranquillity seemed to be restored; but as they drove about at random, and came in sight of no land, the assassins suspected some trick, and fell upon them again. Having had time however in this instance to put themselves upon their guard, they resisted, and mixed their blood with that of their murderers. At last, after a battle in which, on both

sides, five or six were killed, a suspension of arms was a second time agreed upon, and the Lascars resumed once more the management of the vessel. The day subsequent to this affair, coming in sight of the Maldives, the pirates made an offer to the Lascars of the boats belonging to the vessel, in which they might get ashore as well as they could: they accepted it, and quitted the vessel, which since that period has never been heard of.

As for the Lascars, they landed upon the first island they could make, but were sent to another, in which resided the king. They were treated humanely by this prince, who ordered that a passage free of expense should be given them to the coast of Malabar. They disembarked at Mangalore, and had the presence of mind to declare themselves Lascars belonging to the French. Accordingly the officers of Tippoo received them as friends, and they were conveyed to Mahé, whence

they returned to their home. This tragical event was inserted in the public papers, and every exertion was made to discover the vesseland the pirates; but the fate of neither has ever been known.

Boats.

With the exception of a few moorish ships, and one or two from Bengal, which come every year as far as Jedda, the navigation of the Red Sea is confined to vessels, which they call *daous*. These are open boats without any kind of covering, and which a heavy wave would be sufficient to fill and send to the bottom; but they are rarely exposed to such danger, from keeping almost always near the coast. Often they will make their way, even between the land and the reefs, which prevent other vessels from approaching it, but across which there are passes with which they are acquainted. These boats are of a handsome form, and may be brought to considerable perfection. They carry a single square sail; and though the

mast is ill proportioned, and aukwardly placed, and the sail often formed only of straw, they go through the water and perform their voyages in a very superior style.

The business of the port of Mocha is performed by two large and very heavy boats, pointed at the ends, but how constructed I could not ascertain; apparently they were put together like the boats in Europe; but their shape was so singular, that I was at a loss what to make of them. They carry a mast, and an unwieldy sail of straw, made of pieces about two feet wide, and five or six long, sewed together. By the help of this sail, which it is difficult either to hoist or to manage, they perform expeditiously the business of the road; but every time they tack, being obliged to take it down before they shift it, they fall during these manœuvres so much to leeward in rough weather, that they cannot get to Mocha, and are compelled to take shelter in the adjoining bay,

whence they come the next morning to the pier *.

Mocha.

Mocha is situated at the extremity of the dominions of the iman of Sana, in the province of Yemen, on a small bay, formed by an island of sand towards the south, and a ridge of rocks to the north. On each of the points of land which inclose the road, the Arabs have built a fort. These forts are a wretched kind of circular redoubts, the foundations of which are

* The latitude of Cape Babel-mandel has been determined by a series of observations, taken between that cape and Cape Saint Anthony, to be 12° 43′ north.—By D'Apres, it is 12° 45′.—By Bruce, 12° 39′ 20″.

Latitude of Mocha, 13° 24′.—By D'Apres, 13° 22′.—By Niebuhr, 13° 19′.

Variation north-west: At Mocha, 12° 45′.—By D'Apres, 13°.—By Niebuhr, 12° 40′.—At the straits, 12 °54′.—By D'Apres, 12° 40′.

The tides are 12 hours.—According to Niebuhr, 11 only.

The tide rises 4 feet.—According to Niebuhr, 3 feet 6 inches.

Longitude, by obſervation at Mocha, 43° 7′ east of Paris.

masses of granite; the embrasures also are formed of large stones or pieces of coral: but these openings, though tolerably wide, are scarcely more than two feet high. The whole is surmounted with a building of bricks raised over the artillery like a crust over a pie, without any inside work, even so much as a beam, to give it solidity. It is only of the thickness of one brick, so that the wind, the rains, or the firing of the guns, is often sufficient to bring down this roof upon the heads of those who are beneath it.

These batteries, which a single shot would demolish, have a flag-staff, on which the standard of Mahomet is displayed every Friday: this is a red flag, with a white two-bladed sword in the middle. The figure of the sword is miserably delineated; the handle is extremely short, and the two blades are so aukwardly designed, that, instead of a sword, one might take them for a pair of breeches.

The town is of a circular form, and has six gates: of these, one is called the Sacred Gate, through which no foreigners are permitted to pass; and if any one should be rash enough to attempt it in spite of the prohibition, he would expose himself to danger from the Bedouins, who are always encamped on the outside, and who might punish his temerity with a dagger.

The town is without a ditch or any external defence, and the wall all round is every where accessible. The foundations and first tier of the wall, to the height of four feet in some places, and in others only three, consist of large stones intermixed with pieces of coral, which proves that the materials were scarce when the town was completed, and that they used for the walls whatever they could find. Next to these stones is a masonry of brickwork four feet thick, and extending to the height of from fifteen to eighteen feet. At the top a parapet is raised of the thickness of a single brick only, with

holes, through which to fire musketry. The platform may be about three feet and a half wide, and the whole is built so slightly, that on every violent storm part of it gives way and tumbles into the town. This feeble wall is fortified every four hundred yards by a large tower, similar to the forts I have described, and in the same defective state. Those which defend the Sacred Gate are the only ones capable of any resistance; they are in some degree firm, are covered, have even lodgments within, and perhaps would not, like the rest, be levelled by the first ball of a cannon.

On looking at these fortifications, it is plain—what will hardly be credited in Europe—that, when a place is attacked, the assault is made by cavalry. Three or four shots will make a very large breach, which a further cannonade soon renders smooth and practicable for horses; the cavalry then set off in a gallop, and the town is instantly taken. This is their

only mode of assault; they are ignorant of any other. Their artillery is in the same rude state as their military tactics. It consists wholly of iron pieces mounted on naval carriages, which they remove with great difficulty from one place to another. I was strongly solicited to enter into the service of the iman, for the purpose of taking the direction of this part of their force; and for a while I would readily have consented, but for the fatal condition of the turban, which was not to be dispensed with, and which I could not even think of without shuddering.

Aden.

The greater part of the materials employed in the building of Mocha was obtained from Aden, a town that was formerly opulent: it is situated outside the strait, in one of the finest bays in the world. Its position is so excellent, that Alexander, it is said, would have made it the centre of the commerce which he purposed to establish with India. The iman of Sana, desirous of attracting ves-

sels to his dominions, fixed however upon the little bay of Mocha, to which he annexed so many privileges and encouragements, that Aden, notwithstanding the superiority of its harbour, and the impossibility of getting through the straits from the other, except during the particular monsoon, was abandoned, and all the commerce transferred to the new establishment; so that Aden exhibited shortly a picture only of ruins. Mocha reaped advantages from this forlorn condition of its neighbour; and is now continually receiving stones and other materials from the wreck of that town, of which the vestiges that remain are scarcely sufficient to determine what was its former extent. At a distance in the offing, some turrets and a wall are still distinguishable on the hill, at the foot of which is the entrance of the bay; but the town itself no longer exists: a wonderful example of the inconstancy of fortune, which has removed into a hole in the midst of a barren plain, where the water even is scarcely fit to

drink, the prosperity which a town admirably situated was unable to preserve, though enjoying all the advantages suitable to navigation, together with a fertile soil, among mountains and valleys, that gave health and pleasantness to the scene. One of the causes that contributed most to the removal of the commerce to Mocha was, that the market for coffee being in the territory of the iman of Sana, he wished to have it shipped from a port within the boundary of his states, and for that purpose laid upon the article so heavy a duty when it was taken to Aden, that the merchants to avoid this charge adopted the practice of shipping it at Mocha.

Next to the gate called the Sacred Gate, towards the north side of the town, is the one called *Babel-mamoudy*. The french consul has the right of making his entrance on horseback through this gate, without being obliged to alight before the house of the governor; a privilege in this

country that is by no means trifling. It is on a spot outside this gate that the Christians are buried who die in the town. There are two tombs, with an inscription to inform passengers, that they were raised to the memory of two captains of vessels trading to Mocha. The rest of the premisses contains only the remains of a heap of bricks scattered over the ground. It is from the situation of this spot that the children so frequently exclaim, *Frengui Babel-mamoudy!* which signifies *Christians to the burying-ground*; a wish which they express in running after foreigners in the streets. This hatred is deep, and would be difficult to extirpate. Tombs.

I was received upon my landing in the usual manner: a party of the principal officers of the custom-house, preceded by the french factors, came to meet me, and conducted me under the Bahar, or *gate of the sea*. The *emir-bahar* was there in council, and gave me a place by his side. He rose up to receive me, laying his right Reception of a Captain.

hand upon his heart, which is the customary salutation. We were perfumed at first with incense of benzoïn and oil of roses, and then with a sort of aloes wood, which is valuable and scarce; it gives a smell in burning that is exquisitely sweet. It is in great request with the Arabs and Persians, who purchase it at the price of an equal weight of gold. They cut, and even grate small quantities of it to burn, and are careful to receive the smoke of it in their clothes. After this ceremony, the emir entertained us with coffee, which I found it impossible to drink. The Arabs in general do not roast their coffee, nor make, as we do, the liquor from the berry, but use for this purpose the pulp only, which we throw away. This they dry, and make of it a slight infusion like tea *. The beverage thus made is extremely insipid, though deemed refreshing by them, and of a more delicate taste

* Niebuhr says the same, page 49, edition of Copenhagen.

than the coffee drank by Europeans; but my palate, I confess, was not refined enough to discover its excellence, and I thought it scarcely better than hot water. I could not conceal my repugnance, which was not the way to confirm me in the favour of the emir, who was a grave personage, but extremely civil, and who had received me with considerable kindness. I made my apology by means of my Bannian, who informed him of my dislike. The ceremony of the coffee being over, I was perfumed again, and dismissed; that is, the french factors conducted me to the house of the governor, amidst a great crowd, who shouted, sung, howled, and made such loud and hideous noises that I was almost deafened. To do honour to my entry, the governor, as was the custom, had sent with those who were to meet me, two horses richly caparisoned, and which were made to carry themselves prancingly, wheeling from side to side. The dust occasioned by their motions, and by the concourse of people that ac-

companied me, added to the heat of the sun, which was scorching, and the noise of the barbarous instruments with which they regaled me, rendered the journey almost insupportable, though it was a short one, for we had only to cross the square belonging to the custom-house: we proceeded however at a very slow rate. When we arrived at the governor's house, we had to ascend a narrow flight of steps, at the landing-place of which I was asked for my sword. I refused to deliver it, and was preparing without further ceremony to return, when my factors stopped me, and the governor was informed of my conduct, who gave orders to let me do as I pleased. I entered the audience-chamber, where an arm-chair was brought me, antiquated, worm-eaten, and large, like those which are delineated in ancient pictures of chivalry. I was placed opposite the governor, and two soldiers with sabres and shields were stationed, one on each side of me. The governor, who was an old man, after saluting me in the manner

of the Arabs, by laying his hand upon his heart, made a sign to me with his finger to be seated, pointing to the arm-chair. As I did not understand his salutation, and was ignorant of the meaning of his other motion, I disregarded the sign; and, conceiving that he offered me his hand, I took it, and, to his great surprise, gave it a cordial squeeze. I observed a gesture in the soldiers, as if to prevent me; but, whether checked by a look of their master, or of some other person, they did not touch me. I took my seat, and the first compliment being over, the governor asked me by an interpreter, why I had refused to surrender my sword. I gave him to understand, that, being a military officer, a custom established in my country forbade me to surrender it without fighting; and that it was deemed as disgraceful in Europe to give up our arms, as it would be thought here in him to give up his turban, if any one should have the insolence to demand it. He laughed heartily at the comparison, and

making a sign to the soldiers, they withdrew. I was then perfumed anew, and had coffee presented to me; but my Bannian telling him that I had disliked this beverage at the house of the emir, he sent to the apartments of the women for a *plow* *, which I was obliged to taste for fear of offending him, and indeed I had no reason to repent my compliance, for I found it delicious. He was highly delighted, and, judging from his civilities, I might have eaten my fill. I expressed my gratitude for the kind reception he had given me, and begged his indulgence and protection if, as a foreigner, I should fail of observing the customs of the country, of which I was ignorant; adding, that it would be always involuntary on my part, should I ever be the occasion of complaint to him. He obligingly replied, that I might in all instances rely upon him, and that he should be happy in giving me proofs of his friendship. At

* See this dish described in a subsequent page.

the same time he accorded me the privilege of walking in his gardens, and particularly on Fridays, when I should be more, he said, at my ease, as it was the day of mosque, and he should himself be in town: I had only to send in my name; but he requested, if I should be told any of his women were there, that I would not go in. With this single exception, I might bathe, and should be waited upon whenever I pleased; and he added, that it would be a pleasure to him to see me availing myself of the liberty he had offered me. This amiable old man was not long governor after this period, as I shall relate in the sequel; but, when reduced to a private station, I still continued to cultivate his friendship. He was a said, that is to say, of the tribe of Mahomet; in consequence of whcih he retained the green turban, and continued to enjoy a high degree of respect.

The house of the governor is a large square building, with small windows look-

ing towards the ground appropriated to the exercise of the cavalry. His seraglio is on the first floor of this building, and he lives himself on the second, for the benefit of the air: the interior distribution is the same as that of the houses in general.

Caravansary.

Near to one corner of this ground is a large caravansary, which is occupied only at the time of the pilgrimages to Mecca. It is a large square building, inclosing a court, with a fountain in the middle for the ablutions prescribed by the law of Mahomet. The building is merely a shed, extending round the court, without either door or windows, and supported by pillars. It very seldom rains at Mocha; and the roofs of these sheds are so low, that, were it otherwise, the rain could not well annoy those who are under them.

This spacious building has but a single opening, which is the door. The ground before the front of it is of sufficient extent

for the camels and asses of the travellers, who lodge at the caravansary at a trifling expense, of which the object is solely to defray the charges of keeping it clean.

I was conducted back with the same parade to the french lodge, where Mr. de Moncrif, agent to the french marine, liberated me from my retinue, by throwing among the mob the value of a couple of piastres, in small pieces of money.

I am happy to inform the reader, that my reception at this place had nothing in it peculiar or personal to myself; with the exception of the great kindness of the governor, it is the usual etiquette, every captain that arrives being received in the same manner.

Ceremony at departing.

As there is a ceremony observed on arriving, so there is one also at departing; which is to take leave of the governor. The usual time for this is a little before the third prayer in the evening. The

visitor, when he comes into the presence of the governor, is immediately muffled up in a red arabian robe, which is thrown over his clothes by two men, and which he carries away with him as a mark of friendship, and token of the hospitality of the Arabs. At my departure I received an elegant casimir robe of this kind, which I used as a dressing-gown for the remainder of my voyage.

European lodges.

There are two european lodges or factories at Mocha, one for the French, and one for the English; and each nation has the privilege of having its own flag over its appropriate habitation. That belonging to the French is a very poor building, of which the warehouses only are good: but the english one is handsome, and can without difficulty accommodate the officers of five or six vessels. The french house, on the contrary, is only sufficient for the consul, so that every captain of that nation has to provide for himself a lodging elsewhere, which is

a serious evil in case of any dispute with the people, who are extremely quarrelsome, and would prevent the French, if they could, from assembling together, that, by taking them singly, they might the more readily get the better of them. The English have the advantage of a mansion that would maintain a siege, and by being together they might defend themselves for a time, escape to the shore, and get on board their ships, in spite of the inhabitants and soldiers combined; for the latter are so extremely ill armed, that twenty resolute men with bayonets fixed would be sufficient to put any one of their battalions into confusion.

Almost contiguous to the caravansary is the custom-house, from which the principal part of the revenue of the prince is derived. The governor is at the head of this department, and passes half the day there in a pavilion by the scales, examining the articles that are weighed, keeping an account of them himself, and register- Custom-house.

ing the receipt, which he pays without delay into the exchequer. The slightest instance of neglect on his part would be charged as an act of dishonesty, and might bring upon him very serious consequences. The governor, who had treated me with so much kindness, lost his place, and was heavily fined by the iman, for having omitted some item in the statement of a receipt. Another said, whom I saw in prison, and who professed great attachment to the French, had his feet, as well as hands, loaded with irons, for purloining the duty on a small quantity of tobacco of about six pounds' weight. It was by dint only of money, that, after being a whole year in prison, he saved his life.

The officers of government are employed all day long in this business; every article of merchandise having an account taken of it, and being subject to a duty. The custom-house is a large square inclosure, with a shed extending round it,

where the different articles are deposited, and remain till they are officially cleared.

There are three mosques at Mocha, two of which are small, and the other large and handsome, with very high domes. The Arabs do not use bells, but have men who stand in a little gallery built round the dome, and call the faithful to prayers, as loudly as their lungs will permit them. They are heard distinctly, particularly at night, vociferating in a hollow tone from these stations. To me nothing could be more aukward and unalluring than this method of summoning the people to the duties of religion. Mosques.

The Musselmans attend the mosques regularly every day, though allowed to pray in their own houses; but Friday is the principal day of solemnity, as Sunday is with us. On that day the governor goes to mosque in the morning in great state, at the head of all the troops, both

cavalry and infantry. Having performed his devotions, he is conducted back in the same manner by the whole garrison, when the infantry form along one side of the ground before his house, and the cavalry perform their exercise. The governor at their head begins some courses on a gallop, which they call manœuvres, after which the troops form in two lines, and charge, brandishing a long lance; the horses are well on the haunches, which gives them the power of stopping short on their hocks, even when going full speed.

Military exercises.

To break in the horses to this exercise, their legs are tied together in the stable, each fore foot to the corresponding hind foot, with the distance of about twelve inches between. In this posture they contract the habit of drawing themselves up, and are extremely pleasant to ride: they are naturally so strong, that this practice does not in the least injure their fleetness. There are several kinds of arabian horses. The sort called *Mascatt*

is produced by a mixture with the persian breed, and is slender, light, and delicately formed: that of Yemen is a native of the country, large and vigorous, the head and loins square, and the chest thick; in running, what they lose in lightness is compensated by strength.

After two charges of this kind, the governor breaks a lance with some of the principal officers, and the rest in parties follow the example. They challenge and pursue each other, performing feats which require considerable dexterity. The challenger gives the reins to his horse, which runs the whole length of the place in a gallop without stopping: his antagonist pursues him, and aims a blow at him behind with a stick, and which the address of the other consists in parrying with a similar stick. As every officer has one or two attendants, he gives them his lance before he begins this encounter, and takes instead of it one of these sticks, which is about

five feet long, and is used as a javelin to dart at his enemy. If the horseman that flies parries the throw, and makes the stick of his adversary fall to the ground, he gains the contest; but the principal skill is either to strike off the turban of his adversary, or to dart the stick so directly on his back, that it may rebound, and the pursuer before it falls be able to recover it. This is the more difficult, because, the distance being short, and the horses running full speed, the course lasts as it were but an instant; of course a great deal of alertness is requisite.

The Arabs make use of bridles similar, or nearly so, to ours; with bits like those which the French call *à gorge de pigeon*. In riding they keep a very tight hand, so that the mouths of all their horses have the bars very much bruised. They also make use of saddles; but the bows are so much higher than ours, and they place between the saddle and the horse such a

quantity of cushions and cloths, that the rider is raised six inches at least above the back of the animal. In this situation, the heels hardly reaching to the flank, he can neither avail himself of a spur, nor are his knees of any help to him in keeping his seat: the saddle however is so elevated with trussiquins both before and behind, that he seems to be placed as in a boat, from which nothing can dislodge him. They have housings as we have, and very magnificent ones, red, blue, and green, embroidered with gold. They have stirrups also, but no spurs. The stirrups do not resemble ours, but are large copper shoes, in which they place the whole foot. As this shoe is larger than the foot, it extends at the heel, and it is with this extremity of the shoe or stirrup that they goad the side of the horse: a blow given flatwise produces very little effect, but a kick with the end of it makes the horse instantly obey, and gives him very great pain; for it is generally so sharp as to be capable even of piercing the flank.

The horses are not shod, the hoof growing so hard that it does not lose its edge, and has seldom occasion to be pared.

These horsemen, when properly equipped, have each two attendants, a lance nearly twenty feet long, slender, and elastic, not intended to be thrown, two javelins about five or six feet, used for that purpose, a brace of pistols, and a sabre and shield: the last two articles are not worn by the cavalier, but are fastened to the saddle: their favourite weapon is the javelin. The whole is furnished by the iman; no one, as a matter of right, being allowed to possess a horse through the whole of that prince's dominions. These animals are all distributed by the sovereign, who gives them to such as he deems worthy of this mark of his favour, and takes them away again at his will. Every Arab of illustrious birth enters into the cavalry, and in this manner receives a horse, which he maintains at his own expense, and may ride when he pleases. The

Horses.

officers of the custom-house also belong to this corps, which is in this country as high a distinction as that of nobility in Europe. The cavaliers are very much respected; they wear no uniform; but dress every one as he likes, exhibiting a motley and uncouth appearance to such as have been accustomed to the regularity of dress in european troops. They ride in their benish and trowsers, resembling so many judges rather than soldiers, and have nothing in their air that is in the smallest degree military. To look at them, it is impossible to suppose that the whole corps could stand against ten well-armed men, notwithstanding the superiority of their horses. As to their single combats, it is pretty evident that in point of agility and skill no one of these cavaliers would be a match for an hussar; not but that most of them are skilful in the management of their horses, which are often however of themselves sufficiently tractable. A young said who was my neighbour, and brother of him whom

I have mentioned as being in prison and in irons, was desirous one day of giving me a specimen of his address in horsemanship. He fixed his long lance in the ground, and without letting it go, put his horse into a canter round it, first to the right and then to the left, changing his hand under his right arm, without for a moment stopping his horse, or quitting his hold of the lance.

Infantry.

The foot-soldiers are taken from the mass of the people; they are a most wretched body of troops, without the slightest idea of military movements; they march in confusion, and are with difficulty drawn up in files three deep. The dress of these soldiers consists of a linen shirt in the manner of the country, and a drapery of coarse brown cloth. The commander is armed with a battle-axe, and the soldiers with match-locks, of the most ancient construction. The match is carried in the right hand, but the soldier applies it to the pan with his left in

such a manner that in doing it he can preserve no steadiness, and generally burns either his hand or his whisker. Their pay is barely sufficient for their subsistence; and even what they receive is very irregularly issued. If a complaint be at any time made to the sovereign against a person that is rich, he is fined a certain sum and turned over to the military, to whom it is consigned as pay, either in arrear or advance. The soldiers are fond of being paid in this way, because the collection vesting in themselves, they are sure of getting it; they will besides admit of no delay, and in doing themselves justice are apt to exceed rather than fall short of the sum that is imposed.

These soldiers are brought with great difficulty to any degree of discipline. They are composed of the lower order of people in the towns, the inhabitants of the mountain, and some Bedouins, or Arabs of the desert, who enlist from being unable to maintain themselves at home. They are

black, with shining or frizzled hair, according as they are of arabian or abyssinian extraction, but generally the former. The nobility are almost white, their copper tint being so light that many of the saids are fairer than the quadroons in our colonies. The children resulting from an intercourse of these saids with their abyssinian slaves have a mixture of the african characteristics; but those produced from women of their own race perpetuate its beauty, and have every other asiatic distinction. They supply their seraglios with females from Abyssinia, of whom whole cargoes arrive at a time. I have seen among them some women of exquisite beauty; they are black, but nothing is so bewitching as their form, or so elegant and graceful as their motions. I was one day so struck with one of these slaves as she landed from her *daou*, that I instantly made a proposal by my Bannian to purchase her: she lifted up a dirty piece of coarse blue cloth, which served her for a veil, and exposed a most charming

Abyssinian slaves.

figure. I inquired her price; but the merchant, seeing it was a Christian who wanted her, answered, that he supposed my Bannian to have spoken in behalf of some Musselman, and refused to treat with me.

Beside these girls, the Abyssinians send also cattle to this market, and among them a species of sheep of the african breed, with large tails and long hair, precisely like those at the Cape of Good Hope.

A great number of Bedouins repair to Mocha, to purchase such articles as they want. They are Arabs of a vagabond tribe, wandering about the mountains. Their dress and appearance are by no means prepossessing; and as to manners, they are in general morose, insolent, and to an offensive word will often reply with a stroke of a dagger. They are the more dangerous, as they do not hesitate to fall many upon one. They Bedouins.

usually encamp without the Sacred Gate, where their camels are an obstruction to the passage. Their complexion is black, and they have shining black hair. They are robust and well made, have a savage aspect, go always armed to the very chin, and are extremely quarrelsome. I had some of them introduced to my house for the purpose of being acquainted with them, and I treated them with hospitality to prejudice them in my favour, intending to visit a small town called Moza, about four leagues distant in the mountains; and as I wished to go on horseback without attendants, and to walk about freely in the day, I should be liable frequently to meet great numbers of them. Most of them refused what I offered; others, while eating my pilow, could not lay aside their ferocity: one only violated their precept by accepting some brandy: he assured me afterwards, that their tribe would do me no injury, which I found to be true. I have passed frequently since through a troop of these people, and have

stopped to look at their camels, without their expressing either dissatisfaction or pleasure.

Mocha is built on a very indifferent plan; the streets are well adapted to the country, but an European would think them disagreeable; the houses are lofty, and the streets narrow, for the purpose of being shaded. This method, which would seemingly check the circulation of the air, contributes however to keep the streets cool; and when the weather is hot they are frequently watered. There is not a street in the whole town sufficiently wide for a cart to pass through, and it is as much as the camels when loaded can effect. Mocha.

The middle of the town is occupied by the bazar, of which half is covered in, deriving light from holes made at regular distances in the roof. This bazar is a perfect labyrinth, in which I was twenty times lost. It is under the covered part Bazar.

 of

the building that the market for dry goods, such as linen, silks, glass, porcelain, &c. is held. At one end of it is the street leading to the Sacred Gate, and it is here that grain, dry fruit, oil, grease, &c. are exposed to sale. The smell of this part of the bazar is dreadful. The Arabs make great use of *asa-fœtida*, or devil's-dung, and the market was at all times full of this commodity. The stench arising from it, added to the smell of the oil, was intolerable to me; and whenever, compelled by business, I passed that way, though I escaped as expeditiously as possible, the odour still followed me, and I was obliged to hasten home and fumigate my clothes with incense, to destroy the effluvia of this odious drug, of which I can now scarcely write the name without resorting in like manner to the use of perfumes.

The population of Mocha is very considerable; I reckon it at eighteen thousand souls, exclusively of the camp of the Jews

which is close to the south side of the town. The houses are all built of brick, with extremely small openings for light, except the blind on each story, which is an enclosed balcony, with apertures to look through. They resemble at a distance the balconies in Spain, and at first sight Mocha has very much the appearance of a spanish town.

The houses have uniformly argamasse roofs, with a little shed, called *pandals*, erected on them, and covered with matting on account of the dew, which is heavy here, as in all countries where there is very little rain: under these pandals the inhabitants pass the evening, and frequently the night. For myself, I could sleep no where else, not only from the violence of the heat, but on account also of the cats. This town is the patrimony of these animals; nothing can equal their voraciousness and disposition to theft. The windows being obliged to be open all night for the sake of the air, they have Houses.

an opportunity of entering and rummaging the apartments, where they squall, fight, and make so terrible a racket, that it is impossible to sleep; and instead of going away when they are driven, they will growl, set up their backs in defiance, and almost attack you. I killed or caused to be killed every four-and-twenty hours half a dozen regularly of these animals; but they were the lernian hydra, the more I destroyed, the greater number returned. At last I resigned to them my apartment, and went on the house-top to sleep, where they gave me no disturbance.

The houses of the Arabs are much less convenient than ours. The most useful articles of their furniture are in the highest degree aukward: their locks in particular are master-pieces of ignorance; the box, springs, bolt, key, are all made of wood, and so unwieldy as to weigh at least twenty pounds: nor do they answer the purpose for which they are intended; any key

will open them as well as that which was made for the purpose, and which will often indeed not do so. The houses are almost all built on the same plan. The stair-case leads to a large anti-chamber, common to the whole floor, having the apartments round it. Instead of pavement or flooring, they have slight beams of palm-wood covered with straw, and over this lime. This sort of floor has very little solidity, and is never level, so that a table with four legs will seldom stand firm. The hall in which visitors are received is covered with a carpeting of straw, and has a mattress laid round the sides, on which are a great quantity of cushions to sit or lie upon at pleasure, with small persian carpets at the feet, when the intention is to be sumptuous. Above, all round the room, is one or more shelves loaded with porcelain, which is the luxury of the country. They have no looking-glasses, nor any costly articles of furniture: porcelain constitutes the whole of their decorations. In the

middle of the room a kind of garden is erected in the form of an amphitheatre, the centre of which is occupied by a large hooka, furnished with pipes for the use of the company, and the circumference with pots of flowers, and particularly basil, which is highly esteemed.

The great felicity of an Arab is to be in a current of air, lolling upon a pile of cushions, imbibing the vapour of perfumes which are burnt at his side, and smoking supinely his hooka, with no thought, no care to molest him, persuaded that the next day will bring with it a return of the same indolence, and the same enjoyments. The first story of a house is usually occupied by the women, who are seldom to be seen, and who have a small court appropriated to them in the inner part of the building, towards which their balconies look.

Manners and seraglios.

One of our friends, not very rich, of the race of the inhabitants of the moun-

tains, and of course extremely black, gave us one day an invitation to his house, which we readily accepted. He introduced us into an apartment similar to the one I have described. I was desirous of seeing his seraglio, and I requested the favour of him, but to no purpose; he would not consent. Finding me earnest in this point, he alleged at last motives of religion, which silenced me; but, in consequence of my importunity, he suffered his women to drink their sherbet with us. They were three in number, and were veiled; one of them was his sister. We were talking portuguese, and were jovial and merry; but as soon as they entered, he begged us to assume a graver deportment. The sherbet was brought, and I waited expecting the women to unveil: but no; they received their cups with a *salam* *, and drank under their veils. The extreme blackness of their hands in some degree moderated my desire of see-

* A sort of salutation or compliment.—T.

ing their faces, and there was besides nothing very alluring in their figure; yet, like a true Frenchman, I conceived it a mark of politeness to express the wish, that, by seeing, I might have an opportunity of admiring them. Our friend however would by no means consent to this, except as to his sister; and here he previously enjoined on us the greatest circumspection, which we promised to observe. She was then ordered to unveil. At first she made an appearance of hesitating; but a repetition of the command determined her, and she let down an *ourgandi* that was fastened to her head, and discovered a handsome negro person, with fine eyes, prominent bosom, and a delicate skin. From being exposed in this manner to the gaze of two Christians, she appeared to suffer pain, and sat in a state of embarrassment difficult to be expressed, casting down her eyes, without daring to look at us. Her brother meanwhile was watching all her motions. At last, proposing to me a cup of sherbet, I said, that

I would take one with pleasure, if his sister would do me the honour to present it to me. This seemingly displeased him, for he made her a sign, upon which the veil was resumed, and the three women withdrew instantly. After this, he would never admit his sister into my presence. I was piqued at his continued refusal, and endeavoured in every way I could devise to obtain without his knowledge a sight of her. He however heard of my proceedings, and reproached me in terms expressive not only of the danger I was incurring, but of the ingratitude with which I requited his friendship. His remonstrances made me ashamed of my conduct; and I gave up a pursuit which honour forbade, and a temporary dereliction of duty had tempted me to carry too far.

The dress of the Arabs is well understood, yet in our theatres the turkish turban is continually confounded with theirs. The turban of the Arabs has one, and

sometimes two pendants behind, like the mitre of our bishops, distinguishing it from that of the other Musselmans. These pendants are merely the ends of the cloth of which the turban is made.

Their benish or robe, in the fulness of the body and the sleeves, is nearly like that of the benedictine monks. Under this, they have a silk coat, covering a tunic (jacket without sleeves) of linen, or other light materials; and underneath these again, a piece of linen, muslin, or some similar stuff, in the manner of drawers. The form in which this last is worn between the legs gives it a little the appearance of breeches, that is, it covers the thighs tolerably well as low as the knees; but it slides up when they ride on horseback, and they are obliged to cover their nakedness with their robe. Their sash or girdle is sometimes exceedingly large; for they wear no pockets, but fasten every thing they have to carry round their loins.

They are always armed with a poignard; but it differs greatly from the weapon bearing that name in Europe. The blade is wide, smooth, and curved, with two ridges on the sides, commencing at the broadest part, and meeting at the point. The handle is short and sloping in the middle, so that the end answering to the pommel, extending beyond the hand, prevents the instrument from sliding, and gives a firm hold. The shape of this weapon is altogether a curve, nearly like the figure denoting a parenthesis; so that the wound which it makes, though extremely wide, is difficult to be probed, from not being straight. The Arabs generally strike downwards, or else from left to right; in the former case, the bend or curve of the poignard is below, and in the latter the point is directed inwards.

Dress.

The whole dress of the Arabs is admirably adapted to the climate. Nothing can be more refreshing than their ample garments, which allow a free circulation

of the air, leave all the joints of the body unrestrained, and impede none of its motions.

"Mahomet had a strong partiality for the colours of green and red; and these colours have on this account been appropriated to such Arabs as are descended from him, or belong to his tribe. Those who consider themselves as his descendents assume the title of said, and are greatly respected. There were three of these personages at Mocha, of whom two having incurred the displeasure of the iman, one was put into irons, and the other deprived of his place of governor: for these gentry, notwithstanding the estimation in which they are held by the people, are equally subjected with the rest of the nation to the will of the sovereign, who punishes them even less sparingly when they transgress, as indulgence in that respect would embolden and perhaps render them dangerous. In the hands of prejudice or fanaticism, the title they enjoy

might be converted into a formidable instrument: it is therefore the policy of the sovereign to give them a feeling of their dependence, lest, availing themselves of the name of Mahomet, they should attempt to throw off the yoke. Their mark of distinction is a green turban, of which they are extremely jealous. They seldom wear a red one, or a red robe, green being their favourite colour, from its supposed superiority. The privilege of wearing it extends also to the principal officers of government; but only while they are in office: the governor of Mocha has a green robe and turban, while he occupies that station; but if not a said, as soon as his place is taken from him, he resigns these marks of distinction, whereas the saids always retain them *.

The Arabs divide the day into four-and-twenty hours, as we do, beginning with Division of time.

* Niebuhr, p. 10, is of a different opinion as to the green turban.

six in the evening. When they purchase any of our watches, they put the hand at sunset to twelve, and as the figures on the plate are different from theirs, the handle serves as a mark to direct them in counting: so that when the hand comes round to this mark, instead of calling it twelve o'clock, as we do, they call it six. In their division of the year they reckon by lunations, and are very exact in announcing the appearance of a new moon: there is even a reward for the first who discovers it. As soon as it is perceived, a piece of ordnance is discharged at one of the batteries, and the inhabitants of the town make great rejoicings. They first go to prayers, and afterwards spend the rest of the day as a festival in their families.

Jews. At the distance of about five hundred paces from Mocha, to the south, the Jews have a camp, where they live in straw huts. They are prohibited from residing in the town, but are at liberty to do as

they please in their camp, which is often riotous enough: for the Mahometans not admitting the use of strong liquors among them, the sailors can no where procure any but of the Jews, who sell them bad arrack, distilled from rice. These Jews are numerous, their population amounting to twelve or fifteen hundred. I did not observe among them a single individual who was not a complete negro: they have sleek and shining hair, and are similar in all respects to the Parias in India.

If the jewish families of Europe, and the celebrated beauties we sometimes find among their women, are really descended from the same stock as the Jews of Mocha; if, faithful to the prejudice which forbids them from intermarrying with families of a different religion, the descent has thus been preserved strictly jewish on each side without adulteration; we have nothing to which to impute the difference I have described, but the operation of climate. Their black colour would then

not be inherent in their race, but would merely be a change effected by the sun. I do not pretend to support this hypothesis by a fact of so dubious a nature as the difference of colour. On the contrary, I am convinced, that the eastern Jews must anciently have intermixed with european families, and that an ancestry of five hundred years, purely jewish, without any alloy whatever, could not be found among them. Be this as it may, the Jews of Mocha are poor and oppressed, are the reverse of handsome, and very uncleanly. Those young females in the synagogues at Hamburg or Amsterdam, who gain an admirer by every glance, would be shocked at the idea of being compared even with the most captivating beauties among their tribe at Mocha.

Besides that of the Jews, another strange cast is tolerated here even in the town itself: these are the Bannians. Of all the variety of religions, sects, societies, and casts which exist, that of the Bannians, be-

Bannians.

yond contradiction, is the one that does most honour to humanity. In the exercise of the social virtues they have no parallel. One of their chief precepts, as is well known, is to love every thing that breathes, to assist every thing that is in pain, to abhor the spilling of blood, and to abstain from food that has enjoyed life; and they practise this precept in its utmost rigour. Nothing can induce them to take any other nourishment than milk, butter, cheese, rice, and vegetables. They are particularly tender in their treatment of all sorts of animals. Mocha abounds with dogs, which have no owners, and which live in a southern part of the town, where they are seen in packs, sleeping three-fourths of the day in small holes, which they dig themselves. To me nothing can be so offensive and disgusting as these animals: many of them attain to a great age, and all without exception are devoured by the mange, destitute of hair, quarrelsome, and almost famished; they bark, or set up a howl at every one

who passes, and are objects of detestation to the inhabitants. They are not suffered to enter the town; and they keep therefore in one situation, where they multiply so fast, that, whatever havoc is made among them, their number seems never to diminish. The Bannians extend their compassion to these detestable animals, and even take particular care of them: they bake little loaves of bread for food, which they carry to them almost every hour in the day: one or other of this tribe is seen continually passing with a little copper pot of water in one hand, and a loaf in the other. The dogs know them, and as soon as a Bannian is perceived they hasten to him in swarms: the most eager get a few bits of bread, and others a little water, while those who get nothing wait the arrival of another Bannian, who shortly appears and dispenses in the same manner his water and loaf. Their dress is a white robe and a rose-coloured turban; the different tribes of animals know them so well, that the pigeons are often extremely

troublesome, and no bird ever flies away to avoid them. I have never seen a Bannian take any bird, though I have seen instances of their feeding them on the bushes; though I have seen them scatter rice at their feet, and the birds, wild to other men, flock round and tranquilly pick it up, like so many poultry in a farm-yard. In short, the most timid animals approach them without the least apprehension; and the most successful mode of hunting would certainly be in the disguise of a Bannian, were it possible so flagrantly to abuse the confidence which the amiable manners of this cast have gained them.

Their horror at every thing dead can hardly be described. One of them, named Ramji, came often to my house at the time of my meals to give an account of some business or other he had transacted for me. When any of my people wished to play him a trick, they contrived that a little broiled fish should fall as by acci-

dent upon his hand. The poor fellow upon this would cry out as in an agony, and run to wash himself with an eagerness and care, that could only be equalled by the terror he felt at the circumstance. The flies in all hot countries are eager for drink, and are very often drowned in the dishes and glasses. Ramji would willingly have spent a whole day in restoring one of these insects to life. A method was pointed out to him of putting them into salt to recover them; and he was so overjoyed at the discovery, that he never came to me afterwards without a handkerchief full of salt, to save the lives of as many as he could. These marks of character, though trifling, may serve to depict the extraordinary good-nature and sweetness of manners of these people.

Their disposition is frank and open: a Bannian is ignorant of prevarication and falsehood. The whole commerce of the Europeans is entrusted to them, they alone being able to deal with the Arabs.

What they receive for their trouble is extremely moderate, yet are their probity and honour proof against every temptation. The english factor here is extremely rich; the french ones are by no means equally so, the government having occasioned them very considerable losses. Their commercial house was conducted in the names of Courji and Ramji, the first of whom had rendered such services, both to the company and the French in general, that he received from the king in acknowledgment a gold medal of the weight of six ounces, with the royal portrait on one side, and a representation on the other of the sun rising upon a distant country: the legend on the portrait-side was, *Louis XVI, king of France and Navarre,* and on the other, *chief of the french factors at Yemen;* and the exergue, *I will extend my benefits to the end of the world.* This medal, which was fastened to a gold chain, he wore round his neck, like the badge of an order, whenever he appeared in his habits of ceremony.

Ramadan.

The Musselmans have a season of solemnity and fasting similar to our Lent, which lasts through the whole month of *Ramadan*, during which they are to eat nothing before sun-set. This precept was evidently given to inculcate abstinence; but they contrive to elude, while they would be thought to observe it, by obeying the letter and neglecting the spirit of the command: for they sleep all day, and spend the night in rejoicings and merriment. During this season not an individual is to be seen in the day-time; but the sun has no sooner sunk below the horizon than the revelry begins. They traverse the streets singing, the houses are illuminated, the people assemble in large parties, and the whole town resembles a fair. I took the resolution while it lasted of retiring to my vessel for the sake of repose; for the noise in the streets, as soon as the night set in, made it impossible for me to sleep. To crown my misfortune too, I lived next door to a rigid devotee, who, in performing the duties of Ramadan, ut-

tered the most frightful cries, roaring Alla with the voice of a stentor, and driving away slumber from every eye. His window was opposite to mine, and I could not help suspecting there was a little of the charlatan in his devotion; at least, whenever I looked towards him, he threw himself upon the ground, and redoubled his cries of *Alla*, with an extravagance, that could only be the effect either of gross hypocrisy or the extremest fanaticism. As I could do no business, all the inhabitants being in bed, I lived on board my vessel, and did not come ashore till the last day, when the Ramadan terminated by a procession. The governor in great state, on a horse covered with armour, carries the standard of Mahomet at the head of the cavalry, preceded by the foot soldiers, and followed by the people. He sets out from the principal mosque, and goes round the town outside the ramparts, entering again the mosque, which is announced by a discharge of artillery. The saids walk after him, and every one displays on this occa-

sion all the luxury that his fortune will admit, which gives to the procession an air of extraordinary grandeur and magnificence.

Burying-places.

The Arabs pay religious homage to their dead. The burying-places are a short distance from the town, where every one that dies has a tomb, more or less conspicuous, to denote where he is interred. These tombs are much frequented by the parents or friends of the deceased, who sit upon the ground, absorbed in grief, uttering groans, affecting despair, and making the most piteous howlings. At first I respected their sorrow, and hastened to a distance, whenever by accident I found myself near to them. I observed, that their cries were loud while I was present, and that the moment I was gone these mourners were silent. I supposed, therefore, that their sufferings might be occasioned by the horror they felt at the appearance of a Christian; but my factor soon set me at ease on that point, by tell-

ing me, that it was all affectation; that their mourning in reality was an outward form, rather than a feeling of the heart; which made me afterwards less scrupulous in my conduct. These tombs are not costly; they are a heap of bricks put together, with no ornament, and most of them without an inscription.

The Arabs are strongly attached to their religion, are intolerant to all other sects, and anxious to make proselytes. A Christian who embraces mahometanism is sure to obtain their favour and protection, but without enjoying any great share of respect. Many Europeans have settled among them. The sailor who deserted from me at Cochin had formerly been shipwrecked in the neighbourhood of Mocha, where he was taken care of by the french consul there. During his stay in the town he had embraced the mahometan faith, had cried *Alla,* and been circumcised. He had even married and settled himself: but taking advantage of the first vessel that Desertion.

arrived, he made his escape, abandoning his house, his wife, and Mahomet together. As soon as he learned at Cochin my intention of going into the Red Sea, the dread of being apprehended and impaled induced him to desert. I have mentioned how I regained him. Being thus, in spite of himself, obliged to visit his old place of residence, he told me the whole of his story, and begged me to protect him. This was easy enough; nothing was necessary but to order the officers on duty never to send him ashore, nor put him into any of the boats, that he might not be seen and recollected. Unable however to keep his own secret, he told his companions, that he was prevented by the fear of punishment only from returning to his wife, and that he had never been more comfortable than when living among the Musselmans. Curiosity, and still more the restless disposition of sailors, particularly those of the french nation, put it into the heads of my crew to be Mahometans also, since, as he had done,

they could desert at last, if upon trial they disliked the change. The first who set the example was a stout Caffre, an excellent sailor, and who spoke the moorish tongue well. He waited at the door of the mosque till he saw the governor, when, crying *Alla*, he was immediately seized, and the next day, being circumcised and clothed in the arabian manner, he walked into Mocha my equal, and came to me in an insolent manner, demanding his wages. I told him that every sailor by deserting forfeited his claim to whatever was due to him, that this was the law of all vessels, and that I should therefore give him nothing. I also preferred a complaint against his conduct to the new governor, who was just appointed instead of the one who had showed me so much kindness; but all the satisfaction I could obtain was to have this proselyte sent out of the way, that he might no more insult me in my own house. I desired the consul to inform the governor, that, as the sailor was not a frenchman, I should take no further no-

tice of the affair, but that I would not advise him to take from me any more of my crew, as I should certainly find means of resenting it. A few days after, the son of the hydrographer of the Isle of France followed the example of my Caffre; he belonged to the crew of a small brig, the captain of which took no notice of the affair, though I did every thing in my power to rouse his resentment.

It was not long before I was informed that another of my sailors had been at the house of the governor to cry *Alla*, and, not seeing him, was going again the next day. I watched the moment of his return to my house, and, calling him before me, I reproached him with the wish to renounce his religion and his country. I then insisted on his going instantly on board, whither I was resolved to have him conducted; and I ordered some cord to be brought to tie his hands behind him, that he might not escape. Upon this he made a gesture as if to force the door,

but seeing me armed he desisted: resolved however to desert, he threw himself out of the window. The room was on the second story, and there was at the height of the first what is called a *pandal* or shelter from the sun, made of a covering of mats, supported by poles. He thought, that by jumping upon this pandal, he might let himself fall from thence to the ground and so escape. He performed his first leap safely, but he had the misfortune in the second to break his leg a little above the ankle. He fell with such extraordinary violence, that the bone came through and stuck into the ground, stripping up the flesh from the fracture to the knee. When I came to the spot I was shocked at the sight. I immediately had him conveyed into a room, and we bound up his leg as well as we were able, for I had lost my surgeon: but, in spite of the care which was taken of him, a mortification ensued, and he died four days after. Shortly before his death he expressed a desire that I would see him: I did so; and he con-

fessed to me, that the reason of his wishing to leave me was, that he was a deserter, first from the regiment of Austrasia, and afterwards from that of the Isle of France; that seeing me, as he supposed, about to take him to his corps, he hoped by running away to escape being shot. He added, that he was sensible of his crime in consenting to change his religion, and asked forgiveness of God, the king, and his captain. I was greatly affected at the fate of this poor fellow, and begged he would die in peace. I told him, that I forgave him with all my heart, and that if he had sooner confided to me his story, this cruel event should not have happened, for I would have exchanged him with an english vessel, and he would thus have been safe. In dying he had all the succours of religion, which were administered to him by a German, who was a missionary priest.

This misfortune served to exasperate me still more against the government for en-

couraging desertions; but it had not the effect of stopping the phrensy which seemed to have taken possession of my people. Scarcely had three days passed, when another of the crew went in search of the governor, to ask for a turban; and, undergoing the same ceremony, was in like manner taken from me. I sent to reclaim him, and received for answer, that religion would not permit a Musselman to be delivered into the hands of a Christian.

I immediately formed my resolution. I sent away my effects, with the proceeds of such part of my cargo as was sold. I sent my men also on board, retaining only my armed boat. I then told M. de Moncriff, that, if he thought he should be exposed to any danger from the Arabs by staying ashore, I would with pleasure take him with me, for that I was about to give these people a lesson which they would probably for a long time remember. To the captain of the french brig I gave the same intimation, and repaired to my

ship. These preparations occupied me two days, and the governor supposed the affair to be at end; but he was mistaken. As soon as I was on board, I prepared for battle; and, being ready, I sent a boat, well armed and commanded by an officer, to seize upon all the Arabs that should be found in the nearest daou. My party executed faithfully their commission, and brought me four men, of whom one was the captain. Of these, I put three in irons, and dispatched the other to the governor, to inform him, that if my sailor was not instantly given up, I would carry the three Musselmans in my possession to the Isle of France, where I would sell them as slaves: at the same time I bent my sails, and made every preparation for departing. The first step of the governor was to seize upon my Bannians; but it appeared by their books, that all their accompts with me were settled. His next step was to send for the french agent, who easily convinced him, that he had no concern in the matter, and no

authority over me. The governor then threatened to sink my ship, but was told, that I was so well armed as to be able to silence the forts. Upon this he wished to come to a parley, and an officer of the custom-house with my two Bannians were dispatched for the purpose: I received their boat with an affectation of extraordinary precaution, pretending to be in a condition to batter the whole town.

When the officer was on deck, I gave him no time for explanation, but coming directly to the point, asked him if he had brought with him my sailor. On his answering in the negative, I ordered him to be arrested and confined in one of the cabins as a prisoner, while I sent back the Bannians, with an assurance, that I would listen to no terms till the deserter was restored to me.

After waiting two hours, and receiving no intelligence, I hoisted the top-sails and heaved the anchor apeak. I had scarcely

been half an hour in this situation before my man arrived, looking ashamed and ill, being not yet recovered from his operation. He was accompanied by several Arabs, who entreated me with earnestness to pardon him, alleging every thing in his favour which zeal for their religion could suggest. I immediately released my prisoners; I also gave them some presents, which reconciled them to me, and, before they quitted the ship, I had the deserter tied to a gun, and five-and-twenty strokes with a rope's end were bestowed upon him. This lesson was of service to all: the sailors after this would not expose themselves to the risk of being delivered up if they were to desert, and the governor had no wish on his part for a second contest with me of this nature.

It was now sun-set, and too late to go on shore that night; but I went the next day, accompanied by one of my officers. We were both armed, but had no attendants, not wishing to appear in the least

apprehensive of any danger. The emir bahar told me, that he was extremely glad every thing was settled, and that he hoped nothing of the kind would happen again. I was immediately conducted to the house of the governor. He was not a said, but a negro of a quiet and pacific disposition. He asked me, what I would say, if, now that I was in his power, he in his turn were to make me a prisoner? I answered, that he owed it to his situation to consult justice and not power; but should he so far forget the former as to oblige me to repel force by foree, his conduct might prove detrimental to the commerce of his country; that, besides, I had avengers on board my vessel, whom, in such case, I had instructed how to act. I added, that I would not suffer myself to be taken alive, and would endeavour that he himself should be the first victim of the struggle; and I produced a brace of pistols as I said this, to convince him I was on my guard. Whether he had the magnanimity to feel himself above such

an attempt, or whether he despised my youth and rashness, he smiled at what I said, and merely observed, that I ought, when out of my own country, to behave with more moderation; assuring me at the same time, as to the affair in question, that I should hear no more of it. We parted in friendship, and the adventure was attended with no further consequences.

The money of Mocha consists of small pieces of copper, plated or tinned, similar in form and colour to the shilling of Holstein, and differing from it in nothing but the impression. They are called *comassi*, or komassi, pronouncing the *k* with a strong guttural accent. Sixty-four of these pieces are equal to a spanish dollar*. The other coins most in use here are the crowns and piastres of Hungary: there are also a great number of gold pagodas and sequins.

* Bruce makes forty equal to a dollar, but he is mistaken: Niebuhr agrees with me, and estimates them at sixty-four.

I have spoken above of a german priest who was accidentally at Mocha. He was a missionary to Abyssinia, and had lived some time there in favour with the emperor. His fellow missionary, it seems, had been guilty of some knavery, for which he was put to death; while he had himself escaped with the bastinado on the soles of his feet. I had afterwards reason to think, that his punishment was intended as a lesson of continence. Be that as it may, he had nearly died in consequence of it, and was a long time in regaining his health. As soon as he could travel, he asked permission to repair to Mocha, to complete his recovery by aid of the Europeans residing there. This was granted him by the emperor, who was probably glad to get rid of him: and on his arrival at Mocha the consul admitted him into the french lodge. One day the whim seized him of applying himself to the study of medicine, and he had the vanity in a short time to suppose himself thoroughly skilled in every branch

of the heart of healing. He therefore procured drugs, and began to prescribe. He killed more than half his patients, while those who recovered extolled him as a miracle. The sick ran to him in crowds, and he became rich. At the time of my arrival he was in the height of his practice. He had changed his religious dress for a persian robe and turban. As I had no surgeon, he offered his services to me in that capacity, and began by killing my carpenter, whom by his skilful treatment he dispatched in less than a week. I stopped him however in his career, by refusing to confide to him any more of my crew, and left him to exercise his talents on the Arabs, whom he continued to poison.

His mission to Abyssinia had almost totally failed, and he was thinking of returning to Europe. He had acquired some knowledge both of the language and of the country, and he pretended, that it was perfectly easy to go from

Cossire to the Nile, and thence down the river to Cairo. He frequently mentioned this plan to me, observing, that the essential point was to appear poor: that with this single precaution, and that of a turkish dress, there was nothing to be feared, as such travellers who had seemingly nothing to lose were never attacked. He talked of this project so often, that I yielded to a desire of making a journey to Egypt, and visiting the pyramids. These are now indeed so well known, have been so accurately described by Savary and others, and there are such excellent models of them in the Museum of Natural History, belonging to the botanic garden at Paris, that they are as little spoken of as the Pont Neuf, or any other monument which is continually before our eyes. Yet was my curiosity strongly excited. I was desirous to examine myself these astonishing remains of antiquity, to compare them with the descriptions which had been given, to penetrate into their interior, and inspect them on all sides

Cossire.

Plan of a Journey to Egypt.

with the most scrupulous attention. I therefore listened to the project of the missionary, and we made the necessary arrangements for the excursion. I began by converting my money into bills of exchange upon Cairo, which were furnished me by my Bannians. I determined that my four best sailors should accompany me, and I undertook the care of them as far as Italy, promising them on their arrival there a reward proportioned to the satisfaction I should derive from their services. I equipped both myself and them in a persian habit, and armed each of them with a brace of pistols, a sabre, and a musket. I took myself such arms as I thought necessary, and the missionary did the same. I bargained for a daou to carry me to Cossire, the price of which was to be two hundred piastres. We agreed with the owners of the boat, to proceed in a direct line, by the help of my sailors, and not to coast it, as is usual in that country, by which means we should be able to perform the voyage at most in

five or six days. The daou was brought alongside my vessel, and I furnished it with lead-lines, compasses, a chart, a good telescope, and a quadrant. This done, I was on the point of setting out, when the french marine agent signified to me, that he could not suffer me to expose myself thus with an adventurer, who was engaged, for aught we knew, with a band of robbers, who might plunder me and my men, and share with him the booty. He added, that the king's subjects (the republic did not then exist), whom I was about to take with me, might be of service to his majesty; that I ought not, besides, but in a case of the greatest necessity, to quit the command with which I was entrusted; and that, in short, in his quality of marine agent, he should oppose my project. As he had over me no authority in such matters, I paid little regard to his opposition. But he contrived to render it effectual, by procuring the interference of the governor, to whom he represented me as a madman, about to plunge headlong into

adventures, which would be attended with the most disastrous consequences, as well to myself and my companions, as to all those who should have any thing to do with us; that the obstinacy of my temper had been apparent in the affair of the apostate sailor, on whose restitution I had so peremptorily insisted; and he concluded by entreating him to prevent my departure. The governor sent for me to his house, and after endeavouring in vain, by every means in his power, to dissuade me from my undertaking, he laid an injunction on the boats of the country not to engage with me for that or any passage whatever. At the same time, believing me rash enough to undertake it in my own boat, in spite of the dangers of the voyage, he informed me, that if I did so, he would take measures to make me, when I arrived at Cossire, repent of my folly. I was thus under the necessity of relinquishing a plan, to which I was the more attached from having long entertained the idea of it, and which

I abandoned at last with the utmost reluctance. Thus ended my scheme, which I now fear I shall never find an opportunity of executing. I returned my bills of exchange for Cairo, and resumed the usual course of my business.

The government of Mocha having formerly given cause of complaint to the french company, the latter sent out a force to revenge this conduct. A body of about five hundred men were landed upon the small island of sand which forms the southern boundary of the road, who took possession of the fort. The ships which brought them anchored near the town and prepared to cannonade it. The arabian cavalry made a sortie on the French; but the latter had taken the precaution of planting some *chevaux-de-frise*; and the Arabs, astonished at a contrivance so new to them, were thrown into confusion and routed completely. Their loss was so great, that the place surrendered. A treaty of commerce was concluded, to

French treaty.

which the Arabs, strict observers of their word, have faithfully adhered. It was provided in this treaty, that the French should enjoy a free trade in Yemen, paying however the imposts and duties which the sovereign fixed at that time, and which have not been altered. They were also to have the right of riding on horseback in the town, and the exclusive privilege of passing the house of the governor without being obliged to dismount. This concession appeared to the Arabs to be a point of the utmost moment, and it was not admitted till after the warmest debates, while they agreed without difficulty to an article of genuine importance, which permitted the French to use their own weights and measures in commercial transactions, disregarding those of the country. They were also allowed to establish a lodge or factory in Mocha, and another in Bethelfakih, with the privilege of hoisting their flag in those places; and it was further agreed, that both at Bethelfakih and at Mocha the french articles of merchandize

should be exempted from being carried to the custom-house, and should be deposited at once in the warehouses of the lodge, where an officer of the Arabs might inspect them. This treaty, so highly advantageous to the French, has to this day been punctually observed. The good faith for which the Arabs are remarkable has prevented them in the slightest degree from infringing it: but it has served to augment their hatred to the Christians. As many of the cavalry by whom our troops were attacked were killed, the surviving relatives cherished in consequence a resentment, and have been successful in raising among the people the strongest aversion to the French *. I have myself experienced its effects, and been often exposed to personal insults. Sometimes a number of Arabs attacked me with stones, and at others, bodies of Abyssinians with sticks. One day in particular, assisted by one of

* One of the french captains was assassinated by the relations of an Arab, who died in that engagement.

my officers, I maintained with five of the latter a most ludicrous battle. We had made ourselves, I and my officer, each a large whip for the purpose of driving away the dogs, which followed us in crowds whenever we passed near their haunts. We were armed with these whips when some Abyssinians insulted us, and, to defend ourselves, were forced to make use of them. These weapons were new to our adversaries, and the noise of their cracking, and two or three strokes skilfully applied, sent them off howling like so many demoniacs. This adventure obliged me once more to have recourse to the governor, who, under pretence of protecting me, gave me one of his men, with a *bandoleer*, ordering him to accompany me every where, and see that I was respected. I was not so stupid as to be the dupe of this compliment. I knew that this soldier was a spy upon me, and was to report all my proceedings; but as there was nothing which I had the least interest to conceal, I was indifferent upon the subject. I had

reason however to rejoice at the circumstance, for his presence often protected me from insults, which I must otherwise have endured.

Mocha is situated on a plain, reaching from the coast to the foot of the mountains, which is an extent of four leagues. The soil consists of sand, mixed with coarse gravel and small stones, which are chiefly fragments of granite. On the whole plain we find only a few wretched plants of cassia, the leaves and berries of which, as soon as they begin to spring, are devoured by the camels: these plants excepted, the plain is as destitute of vegetation as the sands of the shore. Soil. Cassia.

Travelling over this plain is very disagreeable both to men and cattle, as it affords no shelter against the heat of the sun, which is burning. Wells have been dug here and there by the Arabs, as watering-places; and near to each of these spots is a small house inhabited by people who

keep the wells in repair, and furnish travellers with water at the moderate price of a komassi. These wells, with the camels, the asses, and the dress of the inhabitants, reminded me of scenes described in certain passages of the Bible, which they very much resembled.

Water.

The water in this plain is so bad as to be hardly fit to drink. As the ground lies low, the sea still filtrates through the whole extent of the plain, so that wherever we dig we are sure to find water at no great depth; but it is all so brackish, that by putting it into a hole two feet deep salt may easily be extracted from it. At first the water will sink into the sand; but, if properly supplied, the sand will soon be saturated, and the rest of the process will be effected without trouble. The saline particles contained in the sandy earth, of which this soil is composed, being separated by the water, unite and sink to the bottom of the pit, where they are soon calcined by the sun.

There is no good water in the town; all that is used is fetched from a large well at the distance nearly of half a league, where there is a considerable watering-place, constructed for the cavalry: horses, mules, asses, every morning and evening, come to this place to drink. The inhabitants are obliged to partake of this water, which is brought in leather bottles to the town on the backs either of men or asses. It is bad enough even when the bottles are old and seasoned, but when they are new it is perfectly detestable. It is unwholesome too, and frequently occasions inflammation in the bowels, a disorder which in hot climates is mortal. In proportion to the distance from the sea the water is less brackish, and in the mountains it is excellent.

Towards the south of the town, nature has left a strip of vegetative earth, about half a league broad, and from three to four leagues long. It is covered with date-trees, among which some gardens

are formed, and pleasure-houses erected, if we may call by this name huts of straw, and paltry buildings covered with palm-leaves. They however answer the purpose for which they were intended, affording a shelter from the injuries of the weather, and permitting the owners to enjoy the cool air, and smoke their hooka.

Suburbs of Mocha.

On this spot was the garden of the said, Mohamed Abdala, the ex-governor, who had treated me with so much kindness, and I often visited him there after he was deprived of his office. The iman, when he degraded him, laid him under a heavy contribution for the soldiers, who took possession of his house, and loaded with insults the very man whom two days before they had implicitly obeyed. His friends assisted him in his distress, and he discharged the demands that were made upon him at the expense of nearly his whole fortune. After this event, he retired wholly to his garden, where he passed his days lolling on cushions or in

the bath, smoking or asleep under some shade, sunk in the most complete apathy. My visits always gave him pleasure; I smoked familiarly the hooka with him, and we often fell asleep together, reclining on our separate pile of cushions. When I awoke an excellent *plow* was sure to be before me, of which he in no instance partook, as he would never eat in my presence. He detained me as long as he was able, never suffering me to go till I had merely time, by trotting my ass fast, to get to the town before the gates were shut. There was a door indeed left open for passengers nearly the whole night, but it was so extremely low, that it was necessary to creep upon the ground to get through, which obliged me always to return a little after sun-set.

This large plantation of date-trees is the only spot of ground that is cultivated in the neighbourhood of Mocha. The Arabs take great care of it, water it regularly, match the different sexes of the plants,

and gather vast quantities of dates, exporting what they do not consume. This is the only species of palm which I observed in Arabia: they have, however, the *vaquois*, though I did not see any; nor did I see any cocoa-trees.

It is with great impropriety that the name of Mocha is given to a particular kind of coffee, as there is not a plant of this sort growing in the neighbourhood of the town: it owes its appellation solely to the circumstance of being shipped at that port. There is in Arabia a tree called *marsh*, and another called *oschar*, of which the wood has the same quality as that denominated in our colonies *roundwood*—of readily catching fire by friction.

When we have cleared the plain on which the town is situated, we arrive at the mountains, where is the village of Moza or Muza. The appearance of the country is here totally different. The village is in a pleasant valley, and is sur-

rounded with a perpetual verdure. The mountains shelter it from the tempestuous winds to which the town is exposed, and the air is perfumed with the fragrance both of flowers and fruits. The inhabitants enjoy a cool shade under the palm, peach, badamier, and other trees with which the mountains abound. The water is excellent, and I used to have it brought from this place every day for my use: in short, Moza is sufficient of itself to obtain for the province of Yemen the appellation of Arabia Felix.

This country does not possess a single carriage of any description whatever: the use of wheels is unknown: every thing is carried on the backs of men, mules, asses, or camels. This last animal is a native of Arabia, and will neither thrive nor propagate any where else: none of those which are in India breed there, or at least the instances are rare. It is the most valuable of all the animals in this province, and is in every respect adapted by nature to live

Camels.

in deserts, as it is singularly temperate. Its reserve of water, by which it can live for several days without drinking, is well known. It is known too to be of the species of ruminating animals; but how long it will endure hunger, without perishing, has perhaps never been ascertained. I had one on board my vessel, which did not drink during the whole passage from Socotara to Pondicherry, which was seventeen days; nor did it eat in that time more than twenty pounds of millet straw. After the fourth day it seemed to ruminate but little, about a quarter of an hour a day, as nearly as I could observe. As soon as it was landed, it ran to a spring and drank plentifully; and it appeared in as good condition as if it had suffered no want. Though its thirst was great, its desire of food was by no means so. It still ate moderately, and with no more eagerness than usual. The camel is extremely indolent, unless harsh means are taken with it. It will often lie down upon its belly, and would continue for days toge-

ther in this posture without rising even to eat, till almost famished. A rope of twisted straw is put into their mouths to raise them from the ground. It is remarkable, that, living as it does entirely on vegetable food, the breath of this animal should stink; but, from a putrid odour contracted in the stomach, it is so very offensive as to be almost intolerable *.

Another singularity of this animal is its aversion to all sorts of dirt, which is so great that it cannot be made to travel a muddy road unless driven by blows. Its foot is soft and sure; it never makes a false step, and never slips. It is said, that camels are unable to run, and that dromedaries therefore are obliged to be employed in journeys that require expedition. On the contrary, I can affirm with truth, that

* It is the same in almost all desert countries, where cattle have nothing but plants of an alkaline or saline nature to live upon.

they are extremely nimble in their paces. I have rode many of them; their trot is extremely rough but quick; they are indeed not easily made to gallop, but when they do, it is with a swiftness exceeding the best race-horse in England. They move with such vigour, that the rider could not keep his seat, but for a long wooden pin, that goes through the bow of the saddle and passes over his thighs, to prevent him from being jolted; without this contrivance he must inevitably fall the first instant of a gallop. The camel lies down on his belly to be loaded, and gets voluntarily up again when it finds itself burdened too heavily, or beyond the usual weight. In the same manner it lies down to be mounted, and does not get up till it is told. The rider must be careful when it rises to keep a firm hold, for the motion is violent, and seldom fails to dismount those who are not accustomed to it. A camel carries in general two bales of coffee, weighing six hundred and twenty-six pounds; with the pack-saddle

and furniture the weight is full seven hundred: this is the extent of its burden, and is never exceeded. The camel is led by means of a ring put through its nostrils, or one of its upper lips*. This method alone, however, is not sufficient; for the camel is so stubborn in its temper that blows must be added to render it tractable.

Arabia is the country for asses, of which there are two sorts; one common, like those in Europe, and another more scarce. The latter are of the size of a large horse, and are very strong and swift: they are much used for riding, and are employed by the Arabs in the cavalry, and indeed on all occasions except those of ceremony. One of these asses, with his ears and tail cut, has the appearance of a handsome rat-tailed horse: when crossed with arabian mares they breed the finest and

* The upper lip of the camel is divided, so that it has two.

largest mules in the world. They surpass the horse in strength, and are monstrous as to size: the iman never sells them for less than a thousand piastres a-head, a price greater than that of horses, which are scarcely ever valued at more than eight hundred.

The Arabs are extremely curious in antelopes, and have a very handsome sort which they rear in their houses. They become domestic, and are models of agility and gratefulness. They are so familiar as to be troublesome. They leap in general by three springs, of which the second is the longest, and all their feet rise and come to the ground together. They are in height from thirteen to fifteen inches, and can leap six or seven feet. Their coat is grey, with a silvery belly; and their horns, which are strait, are of a shining black, and never longer than two inches. These animals also are remarkable for their temperateness; a quality which the penuriousness of the cli-

mate certainly renders necessary, but which they do not lose when removed elsewhere: it is incredible on how little nourishment they will subsist, and preserve themselves in good condition.

I mentioned above, that the Arabs have arrived at no great skill in the arts. Their religion, which forbids the use of images, deprives them both of painting and sculpture. Their architecture is rude, and seems to be formed on no regular system. Our five orders are unknown to them. Their principal buildings have a considerable resemblance to the gothic style; at least the arches of the great mosque at Mocha are gothic; those of the roof *ogee*, and supported by pillars which appeared to be of the same order. Arts.

The mode of constructing their houses consists in raising four brick walls with no plan, no design, and no taste. In placing the windows not the smallest attention is paid to symmetry, and the walls

are crowded on the inside with little niches, which at first sight a catholic would suppose were intended to contain images of saints, but which are made to hold the lights at night, or else to stow away goods. Their mortar is made of shells and coral, but it costs them dear, as the coral is brought from a great distance. The roofs of their houses are made in the *argamasse* manner, and are terminated by little triangular steps, close to each other, as is represented in the plate of the Arab on foot.

The navigation of the Arabs is confined to a timid coasting along the shore. Their music is so barbarous as to be even a thousand times worse than that of the savages of Africa. We have seen what is their knowledge of medicine, in the instance of the missionary I have mentioned; and the testimony of Savary, Bruce, Niebuhr, and Volney, confirms my assertions.

They are altogether ignorant of mechanics, and have no wheel carriage of any

kind; every thing is done by the mere strength of the arms; even a cart is not known among them. Their plough is a wretched instrument without wheels, the share of which works nearly like ours, but the toil is great both for the cattle and men. The cultivation of the land in almost all its branches is a business of bodily labour. By means of a plank, with a rope fastened at each end, they heap up the earth, and make little banks of it, to retain the water, as in the fields prepared for rice; they then break up the ground either with their ploughs or with pick-axes, the sower following close to the labourer, and scattering the seed, which the latter, as he returns, treads in with his feet. In spite of so imperfect a method they have excellent crops. The wheat in the worst soil yields ten for one, in the ordinary twenty-five or thirty, and in the best, in some places, fifty, particularly among the mountains. The millet is still more productive, and affords

even a hundred and fifty for one; a proportion that is almost incredible.

While many arts are wholly unknown in this country, others are in their infancy. But with literature and the sciences it is different. The excellence of their poetry is well known; and as for the sciences, the Arabs are as well skilled in geometry and astronomy as it is possible to be without the aid of instruments, or with the imperfect ones they possess. Their genius is particularly adapted to numerical operations; they are good arithmeticians, and play well at chess. This game drew many of them to my house, of whom one in particular was so expert that he beat us all, and for that reason was called *sap-mate*, and at last known by no other appellation: his friends grew so accustomed to it, and used it so constantly, that it remained with him. *Sap* is a moorish word of distinction, answering to *sir*: to express respect to a woman, they say *bibi-sap*.

Horned cattle are so scarce in Arabia that there are very few killed; and as a want of the flesh of these animals often prevails at Mocha, camels' flesh is substituted in its stead, which the butchers sell in the shambles like beef. This meat is agreeable and nourishing, but rather resembles veal than beef. The soup made of it is excellent; I was so extremely fond of it, that I never complained when my landlord apologised for being able to procure me no other.

Fish is the principal dish in places near the shore; it is in general plentiful and good, and of the same kind as ours: there are no fish, nor any birds, of passage. I saw neither storks nor swallows. Storks however were seen by Niebuhr at Mosul. There are quails, but they are stationary. The *samargog* or locust-eater is found here: I met myself with none of these birds; but, from the description which was given me, I suppose them to be of the

Productions.

species of blackbird, known in the Isle of France by the name of *martin*.

The fruit-market here is perhaps the most extraordinary in the world. Nature has done every thing for this country; and when we consider the numberless advantages she has bestowed upon it, the strength, the talents, and courage of its inhabitants, it is difficult to account for their not having become the greatest nation on earth; unless we suppose, that, possessing in themselves every thing to be wished for, they have never attempted the conquest of countries that offered no attractions, and did not enjoy half the advantages with which their own country abounded. Arabia produces every thing. I have seen the market-place filled with apples and oranges, plums and citrons, apricots and pines, peaches and bananas, bretts and artichokes, grapes and mangoes; in short, with all the fruits and vegetables of Europe and Asia: but the heat is so excessive, that annual fruits

ripen too quickly, have little juice, and decay in a fortnight: those of the ever-green-trees, on the contrary, succeed well; and the fruits of Asia are accordingly in this part of the world much superior to those of Europe.

Their religion prohibiting the use of fermented liquors, the Arabs make no wine, nor even extract any liquor from the date, which would supply it, as well as the cocoa-nut; but they dry a great quantity of grapes, from which a drink peculiar to the country is made, and which is tolerably pleasant. For want of other wine I was obliged to make use of it. It is produced thus:—thirty pounds of dried raisins are put into a hogshead of water, and left for three days to ferment, when the liquor is racked off and put into bottles. It very much resembles champagne. The Arabs partake of it in spite of the koran, every one having an opportunity of making it privately in his own house, and I was often asked in secret to drink

with them. Their fondness for brandy also is but little checked by the prohibitory commandment, the great resort of foreigners to Mocha rendering them less scrupulous there in points of religion. They often indulge their inclination; and though they do not suppose Mahomet to be blind, will drink it with delight, when they are certain of not being observed by their countrymen. It was perhaps to their love of strong liquors, more than to any thing else, that I was indebted for my acquaintance with many of the most distinguished persons in the cavalry, who visited me with the hope of secretly indulging their passion. The Jews make some arrack from rice, but it is so badly distilled, that none but negroes or sailors can drink it. The Arabs, independently of the dictates of religion, wholly abstain from it; so that the consumption of this liquor is extremely moderate.

Millet is the grain which is cultivated by preference in the province of Yemen, where

there is little barley and still less wheat. The millet grows amazingly stong; the ear, which is seldom less than five inches long, and an inch thick, is abundantly loaded, yielding, as I observed before, in the proportion of a hundred and fifty for one: the stalks altogether are sometimes from five to six feet high. The straw is very valuable, serving as food for the asses and camels. As there is no hay for the horses, the tenderest end of the millet stalks, with the grain in the ear, is given them: this serves also, with a small portion of barley or beans, instead of oats.

The Arabs make little or no bread; but consume, like the Indians, a great quantity of rice. Their usual delicacy is the *pelow* or *plow*. This is made by putting a fowl into an earthen pan, with about three pounds of rice, and just enough water to keep it from burning; the whole is left to stew for six-and-thirty hours, a quantity of spice, such as cardamoms, cloves, and nutmegs, being added: the

gravy of the fowl moistens the rice, and makes it delicious. The smell of a good plow, if uncovered on the fire, would scent a whole house.

The interior part of the country so abounds with rose-trees, that a vast quantity both of rose-water and oil of roses is made, and is exported to every part of the globe. The Arabs are very fond of this perfume, and use a great deal of it. The oil in particular is so strong, that a single drop poured into a chest will give it a scent which nothing can overcome: a box also, in which a bottle of this perfume has been kept, will retain the smell as long as a fragment of it remains; and if the hand by accident or otherwise should touch it, a perspiration of three days' continuance will scarcely suffice to take off the odour.

A great deal of salt is made on the shore of the sea: but the Arabs do not, as is done in Europe, divide a plain covered with water into compartments. They

make a number of uniform holes about four and sometimes five feet wide, and two feet deep, which they fill with sea-water till the ground is soaked, so as to absorb no more. A red crust then forms itself on the surface: the water, which is also red, is afterwards drained off, and the sediment exposed to the sun, which gives it a beautiful whiteness. The salt of Mocha is the finest I have any where seen.

The lovers of shell-work would find ample room for gratifying their taste on the shores of Arabia, where, as to these objects, curiosity has not yet roamed, and where there are shells therefore in abundance. The most common are the olive, the pilgrim, and Bernard the hermit. There are some in high preservation both as to form and polish.

The principal object of cultivation in Yemen is coffee. This tree is too well known to require a description. It is a Coffee.

native of Arabia, and though it has thriven surprisingly in the Antilles, at Cayenne, and in the Isle of Bourbon, it has preserved in its original country a superiority that gives it a preference in all the markets of Europe. The fruit, when stripped of its skin, is commonly small and round: it is of a green colour, and has a strong scent. There is another sort growing in the neighbourhood of Ouden, that is black and full of small shining particles like cloves. This has a strong as well as greasy taste, and the infusion made from it is extremely oily. So powerful indeed is its odour, and so sharp its taste, that it cannot be used by itself; but when mixed with the other, it is very agreeable. The usual proportion is one pound to six: it is thus that the company's agent mixes it.

Commerce. The coffee is all carried to Bethelfakih, a small town about five-and-twenty leagues north-west of Mocha, where the general market is held. The French have a lodge there, and are allowed to use the standard

weights of France. The annual period for the market is the beginning of May, that the vessels, which load at Mocha, may begin their voyage early in June, when the monsoon changes. The coffee intended to be shipped is conveyed to Mocha on camels. The exportation seldom amounts to four thousand bales a year, except when the english and french companies have made expeditions there; but these occasions happening seldom, the exportation may be taken at an average of from three thousand five hundred to four thousand bales. A bale weighs three hundred and thirteen pounds, of which the thirteen pounds are allowed for the packing. The common market-price of a bale is forty-two spanish piastres, the duties at Bethelfakih and Mocha, with the expense of carriage to the latter place, included; which is at the rate of about fourteen pence halfpenny per pound. By this calculation the trade of Mocha will amount, in the article of coffee, to twelve

hundred thousand weight, producing a sum of a hundred and sixty-eight thousand piastres. As the Arabs have recourse to foreign countries for many articles of necessity, the balance of trade would be very much against them, if their receipts were confined to this small sum; but the exports from Mocha are of so little importance to them as hardly to draw the attention of the government. The Persians flock to the market of Bethelfakih, and form there the caravan of Bassora. The coffee, which is distributed through Natolia, Turkey in Europe, and part of Russia, goes by the way of Smyrna, and joins the caravan of that name, while that which is intended for the coast of Barbary, and for Africa in general, joins the caravan of Cairo. These three caravans are the principal support of the market of Bethelfakih. The purchases are all made in money, which introduces annually into the province of Yemen a sum greater than it expends in

such articles of consumption as it is obliged to import.

Besides coffee, Arabia supplies other nations with great quantities of fruits, such as pears, apples, raisins, figs, peaches, and dried dates, as well as with cassia, cardamoms, and *assa-fœtida*, which are all productions of its own soil, but of which the value may be considered as trifling in the balance of trade. Its markets furnish likewise incense, benzoin, aloes, and gum. These last articles, however, are not of its own growth, though the principal market is there, for Arabia itself produces but a very small quantity of them. The aloes come from Socotara, which furnishes the best that are known. This commodity is not confined to any particular market, but may be had equally at Mocha, Muscat, Jeddo, and the other towns of Arabia.

Yemen has its gum chiefly from Abyssinia, for it does not produce itself the twentieth part of what is sold in its markets.

It is therefore by no means proper to say Mocha coffee, and gum-arabic. The gum-tree of Arabia is a little, short, stunted plant, and the drops of gum which it yields are small and yellowish. The Abyssinian gum-tree, on the contrary, is large and flourishing, and produces drops in abundance, as large as a pigeon's egg, and as transparent as crystal. The market of Mocha and the places near it scarcely furnish three hundred bales of this article annually. As for the incense and benzoin, they form together but an inconsiderable branch of commerce. The Arabs consume indeed great quantities of them, but they are chiefly supplied by the Abyssinians; and I think it a just calculation to estimate the profit upon what they sell to strangers, as only equivalent to the sum they pay for what they get from Abyssinia; so that the state derives from these articles no advantage.

The sums which this province receives for the productions I have mentioned

serve to pay for the rice which it obtains from India, the sugar from different places, the sugar-candy from Bengal in particular, the iron and cannon from Europe, the cloths and wrought gold by the ports of the Levant, the pepper and different species from the coast of Malabar, the cotton manufactures of every kind from India, silks from Surat, and porcelain and other articles from China.

Though the wants of this country are so extensive, the balance of trade is still in its favour. This will be evident if we consider, that all the business is done by ready money; for though the country possesses no coin of its own, except a small kind called komassi, of which I have spoken, and which cannot be exported on account of its trivial value, yet it abounds with foreign money of every sort, and particularly european, such as the crown-pieces and sequins of Hungary, which serve for all commercial transactions however considerable. The komassis are used only in inferior concerns, that the

coins I have mentioned may remain in circulation in Arabia. The amount of its sales therefore must necessarily exceed that of its purchases, for the latter would otherwise leave no residue of foreign money; and Arabia must undoubtedly be considered as a rich country, since its productions exceed its wants.

Manners. The manners of the Arabs are mild *. The custom of living alone in their seraglios, and consequently of having but little intercourse with each other, their plurality of wives, by which they are enabled to gratify a propensity which the climate creates, and the state of subjection, or rather slavery in which the sex is held, are circumstances unfavourable to licentiousness: while, at the same time, the precept enjoining abstinence from strong liquors being strictly observed, except in those places where the luxury introduced by commerce leads to a neglect of the most important duties, their ignorance of

* In page 249 they are differently represented.—T.

all games of chance, and above all their enthusiasm for their religion, and the despotic influence which its ministers possess, contribute to preserve the purity of their morals. The contempt also which they entertain for foreigners prevents their inviting them to their houses, or having any communication with them. An Arab knows nobody but his family: he faithfully observes the laws of the koran, and the employment of every hour of the day is determined by a precept. The duties of devotion, ablutions, and the concerns of his house, uniformly occupy his time, and his life passes away in a regularity that preserves his manners from corruption. The children, brought up under the eye of their father, and perverted by no intercourse with strangers, adopt the same system of conduct, and seldom or never depart from it.

The government is avaricious, but the people individually are not so. This fatal passion, which every where else is the

parent of so many vices, has not yet found access with the Arabs. The heat of the climate renders their wants few in the article of clothing, and their habitual temperance prescribes the same moderation in their living. In peaceful indolence in the midst of his mountains, the Arab has nothing to wish for: he is happy in the benefits which nature has bestowed upon him, and does not sigh for those of which he is ignorant, and which foreigners can never make known to him in his solitude. His highest pleasure is to have nothing to do. To sleep in a cool situation, to throw himself upon piles of cushions, to imbibe the free air, smoke his hooka, bathe frequently, as well from devotion as inclination, and enjoy the society of his women, constitute the summit of his felicity, and of any above this he has no conception. At the same time that these enjoyments satisfy him, he knows how to value them, and admits in his pleasures of no partner: hence that jealousy which forms so principal a part of his character.

If any thing could introduce a relaxation of manners among the Arabs, it would be their mode of living with their women: the burning heat of the climate, affecting their external senses, acts as a perpetual stimulus to their desires, to which they give themselves up with the less reserve from possessing so amply the means of satisfying them. It was with the view probably of moderating the violence of these feelings, that frequent bathings were prescribed by their religion; but, instead of producing that effect, nothing so much tends to augment them, as the abuse which is made of this practice. The places provided for the purpose are in general from five-and-twenty to thirty feet square, and about three feet and a half in depth, with little steps at the corners to go down. The bottom is sand, or gravel beaten firm, and is always smooth. The master of the family and his women all bathe there together. Over every thing in this picture that may be deemed obscene, I shall draw a veil: it may, how-

ever, easily be conceived, that the sight of so many females, with no covering but a transparent water, must necessarily add to the effects produced by the natural heat of the climate.

In this point of view the manners of the Arabs may be said perhaps to be somewhat licentious; but the legislator, subject probably to the same wants himself, justly conceiving the impossibility of repressing desires so violent, and the danger of attempting it by a precept, has imposed no restriction. Accordingly, the voluptuous Arab may freely abandon himself to the empire of sensual pleasure in the privacy of his seraglio, without being judged depraved in his manners; for in doing so, he violates no law, and deviates from no duty.

The women in Arabia are never exposed to view, even when they travel, though carriages are not in use there. To screen them from public observation, a large packsaddle is placed upon the back

of a camel, having four upright posts, with cloth, fastened to it, and a roof in the manner of a canopy. The woman who travels is shut up in this kind of cage, and performs the intended journey without enjoying a single view of the country through which she is passing. To lift up a corner of the covering which conceals her, would often endanger her life: this depends however upon the character of the husband or master.

In consequence of this seclusion of the women, debauchery is unknown even in those towns where the manners have been most relaxed by luxury. There are no women of pleasure at Mocha, which is often, by the european sailors, deemed a great hardship. One female only, who sold baskets, was thought not to be very cruel to her suitors; but the laws of the country are terrible against the man who should be caught in so flagitious an act: if the government were to come to the knowledge of it, the offender must take

the turban, or he would be put to death. In such moments of dalliance if the woman were desirous of betraying her lover, she has only to call out, and, if observed by a single witness, the European would be seized, and could save his life only by embracing mahometanism. In addition to this perfidy, were she to swear, that, to obtain his purpose, he had cried *Alla*, the crime would be still heavier, and a refusal to take the turban would conduct him without further examination to the punishment of impaling.

These laws are so well known, that the Europeans are on their guard; and the Arabs on their part having no need of such women, the purity of their manners is preserved. From its still possessing a religion and manners, this nation may be regarded as in its infancy. By religion I do not mean a form of worship, which in reality every nation observes, but which is very different from religion. By having a religion, whatever may be its nature, I mean

the firm conviction of the mind as to the truth of its doctrines, the strict observance of its precepts, the persuasion that it is of divine origin, that it cannot err, and the being ready, if necessary, to die for its sake. In this sense we certainly have no longer a religion in Europe. A form of worship, on the contrary, is merely the professed observance of certain exterior practices, which are often dispensed with on the most frivolous pretences, or discharged with a carelessness, which is made subservient to luxury and fashion. We have long had nothing but forms of worship in the part of the world we inhabit.

Arabia must be considered as more distant than any other country from a revolution, because, while she preserves her religion and manners, she stands in no need of a general reformation. The greatest misfortune a country can sustain is to lose these; and in the history of the world we shall find, that, after religion and manners have been annihilated, a

nation could never be regenerated, without a period of barbarism, throwing every thing into a chaos, out of which more enlightened times would gradually arise. The arts and sciences are then re-produced, and the people raised to the height of civilisation, when they again degrade themselves. The sciences, which were first cultivated in India, afterwards escaped to Egypt, and thence to Greece, whence they passed into Italy, which has lost them in her turn, while France has obtained the prize; they now seem to be taking their course towards the north, which scarcely possessed the slightest degree of civilisation when the south was most flourishing. They will thus return perhaps again to their primitive country. History shows us, that the succession of barbarism to more enlightened times, in the countries which we have just named, only compelled the arts and sciences to make the tour of the globe; and, in inquiring into the causes of their decline, we are obliged to admit, that the revolutions

which overturn states are brought about solely by the extinction of religion and morals.

In the enjoyment of a happier destiny, Arabia, instead of apprehensions of revolution, sees the period approaching when she will occupy in her turn the foremost place among the nations of the earth. Her attachment to her religion subsists in all its force; her morals are uncontaminated; she knows neither debauchery, gaming, luxury, nor avarice, and is perhaps the only country in existence where virtue is practised for its own sake.

The strictness of manners of the Arabs must necessarily influence the national character: accordingly no people are more frank, open, and sincere: even the wandering tribes are never known to break their word. The Arab gives no note nor written obligation; neither bond nor security is necessary to bind him to the performance of what he has promised. Two

merchants conclude a bargain without speaking a word; the one touches the hand of the other, and a third spreads a carpet over them; the touching of hands determines the price that is agreed upon, and nothing can break an engagement entered into in this manner. If several deal together they sit down in a circle; the seller sets his price by squeezing the hand of his neighbour on his right side a certain number of times; and such as intend to offer a greater or less price for the goods, augment or diminish the number of these tokens accordingly. The person on the left of the seller signifies the price which has thus come round to him; he who first gave it makes himself known, the buyer and seller give each other the hand, which a third party separates with a slight blow, and the bargain is so firmly concluded, that it cannot be broken. I have witnessed transactions of this nature. It is an established rule, that a vessel shall not dispose of any of her goods without giving notice to the body of merchants,

who are entitled to the preference: the owner is obliged to resign at least a part of his cargo, if he does not sell it all to them, before he disposes of it partially. On such occasions they assemble together and treat in silence, the hand under the carpet: the bargain is concluded without any dispute, any ill-will, and without even a word being spoken, and the engagement is irrevocable.

Such good faith and honesty ought to confound our Europeans, who deem themselves superior to all other nations, yet can settle no business, however trivial, without guarding against the possibility of mutual fraud, by a multitude of forms, dictated by mistrust, and which are often insufficient to protect the creditor from the dishonest practices of the debtor.

The Arab is passionate and vindictive: Character.
Nothing can stifle his desire of revenge: he will readily sacrifice himself, if he can involve his enemy in his destruction; but

this thirst for vengeance never leads him to employ means that are treacherous. He is brave, and does not conceal his designs. The violence of his passions renders him peculiarly susceptible of enthusiasm; and the Arabs have given proofs of what they will do for their religion. In friendship they are firm, generous, and capable of the most perfect devotion. Hospitality is one of their most inviolable duties; whatever may be the crime of him who begs an asylum, he is sacred to his host, who protects him as long as he is under his roof, and, though it were his bitterest enemy, would defer his revenge till he had quitted his house.

The Arabs are proud, conceited, and seldom of a prepossessing deportment: they have besides a most sovereign contempt for all other nations. The converts to mahometanism are never treated by them with any distinguished respect, of whatever utility they may be to them. They not merely despise foreigners, they

perfectly detest them; and the common people frequently load them with abuse and other ill usage: but here, as every where else, the better sort are distinguished by a decency and diguity of behaviour. The higher ranks are in general extremely grave. The ruling passion of the whole nation is jealousy. Every man is capable of sacrificing his wife on the slightest suspicion: his fury would not stop there; he would not be deterred by any difficulty or distance, but would follow his rival to the end of the world to stab him. This disposition renders them extremely vigilant in whatever relates to their seraglios, from which every person is indiscriminately excluded. Even their own children, after they attain the age of puberty, are not admitted.

The iman of Yemen resides at Sana, a town about forty leagues north-north-east of Mocha. His court is far from being so brilliant as it might be, if he would encourage the saids about his person; but

whether he fears them, or dislikes their presence, he keeps them at a distance, and is surrounded only by blacks, who are in entire submission to his will. There are very few Arabs of distinguished family at Sana, and the town itself is but little superior to Mocha. Its fortifications, like those of the other towns, consist merely of brick walls, flanked by huge towers without a ditch: there is not indeed a single intrenchment in the whole kingdom.

The throne of Yemen has been frequently stained with blood, and from these occasions a sort of constitution arose, by which the power of the iman was in some degree abridged; but, though not considered as sovereignly despotic, he becomes so by the manner in which he contrives to have his council composed, without whose advice he can undertake nothing. He thus eludes the restrictions which the constitution has imposed upon his personal authority, and is in reality absolute over the lives of his subjects. The present

reigning monarch has not sullied the period of his reign by any atrocious executions, and is not charged with having put a single individual to death in an arbitrary way. He readily admits Europeans to visit him, but they never do it without carrying presents. When a European arrives at his court, the iman defrays the expenses of his coming, his stay, and his return. Among the presents intended for the sovereign, care must be taken that there is no article of sculpture or embroidery representing the figures of men or animals: every kind of image is so strictly prohibited by law, that nothing of this nature would be accepted. The presents may consist of pieces of green or red velvet, lawn embroidered with gold, jewels, a poignard mounted with precious stones, clocks, watches, and arms. In return, he generally gives the choice of a horse from his stables. Considering the extent of his dominions, he keeps his army at a strong peace establishment. It may amount to two thousand cavalry,

composed of the flower of the nation, and six or seven thousand indifferent infantry, which I have already described. In war he can augment his forces, cavalry and infantry, to twenty thousand and upwards. There is besides a corps of about six hundred artillery of different nations, to manage at least as many pieces of cannon of all sizes, of which not more than twenty are mounted, and these are upon naval carriages, in bad condition, and are drawn by men. The rest being dismounted are of no use. I am speaking of field-pieces, for those belonging to the fortifications are mounted upon two blocks of wood, which serve as a carriage. Their infantry and artillery are so wretched, that three thousand good european troops, with ten pieces of flying artillery, might effect the conquest of Yemen in three months.

Examination of the country.

Arabia without doubt can boast of having been peopled at as remote a period as any part of the globe. The high mountains of granite prove the antiquity of the

country. At the first view of it in a map, it appears to have been an island in the primitive ages of the world, before the existence of the Isthmus of Suez, and when the Persian Gulf joined the Caspian Sea. Since that time its extent has continually increased; and in the lapse of some centuries, the Straits of Babelmandel will probably be a second point of contact between Africa and Asia. There is already but seven fathom water between the Isthmus of Mehun or Perim *, which is the usual passage of vessels. There is a depth indeed of four-and-twenty fathoms in the wider passage, but this depth is confined to the middle only, and is found no where else; in many parts, the sands and the high bottoms prevent large vessels from passing. The Red Sea is deeper than the narrow strait, and is almost every where, between the islands and rocks which it

* This island stands at the distance of a short league from Cape Babelmandel, and forms the straits of that name.

contains, thirty or forty fathom. Many parts of it are even said to be unfathomable; but this must be owing to the imperfection of the lines used in sounding; and, I am persuaded, that hereafter it will be a large lake like the Caspian Sea, when time shall have shut up the strait. The Red Sea has in general been very incorrectly sounded: in tacking between Mocha and the coast of Africa, I have found constantly from seventy to eighty fathom. Mr. de Rosily, commander of the king's frigate Medusa, is the only person who would have been able to give accurate soundings of these parts, if the urgency of the service in which he was employed had allowed him to confine his attention to this object. But he was often obliged to sound when sailing before the wind, for the winds and tides are so violent in these latitudes, that if he had stood across to do so, every time of heaving the lead would have cost him as much distance as he could have gained in six hours. This me-

thod obliged him to use a very short line, so that he seldom let out more than fifty fathom, which were not sufficient to reach the bottom. This is not the case however with his observations, which are made with all the accuracy and justness which his abilities were capable of, and are therefore perfect in every respect. This excellent officer has lately published a chart of the Red Sea from the straits to the Isthmus of Suez. His astronomical observations were made with a chronometer, regulated on the meridian of Mahé; and from the care he has bestowed upon the subject, and his zeal and knowledge united, the greatest confidence may be placed in the correctness of the positions which he lays down. This chart is essentially necessary in navigation: those of former travellers are too defective in precision to be depended upon: one was wanted from a mariner possessing the skill of Mr. de Rosily. Both the public and government owe him on this account a just tribute of acknowledgment.

The sea is visibly retiring from the plain on which Mocha is built. All along the coast of the Red Sea, from the entrance of the straits, the space from the shore to the foot of the mountains of Arabia is daily increasing in extent, and submerging from the ocean: it is not yet covered with vegetative earth, and the sea appears to have left it but yesterday. In many places we seem to be on sand just abandoned, and almost fear the return of the tide. It is not thus beyond the straits, on the side of Aden, where the waves bathe the foot of the mountains, while the base upon which they stand is still in the abyss. At a very short distance the depth cannot be fathomed, except near Cape Saint Anthony, from which it decreases gradually to the straits.

In attempting to calculate the ages that might elapse before the ocean will have quitted the coast of Arabia opposite Aden, the powers of the mind would be lost: while, as to the Red Sea, its water is so

shallow, the islands and sand-banks with which it abounds are so evidently the tops of hills that are slowly appearing, and its retreat is so visible, that we cannot refuse to anticipate in imagination a period at which this vast gulf will be converted into a valley. It is even possible, that this change may be accelerated by some volcanic explosion. The enormous mass which constitutes the mountains of Arabia rests upon no solid basis. An internal conflagration has excavated beneath their foundations immense caverns, which, passing under the bed of the Red Sea, communicate with Africa. The little island of Gebelthor still burns and smokes, from the effects of these volcanic processes.

Zeila and Mocha, two towns on opposite coasts, are built upon correspondent submarine veins of this description. The pyrites contained within them continually burn, and have set fire to the combustible

substances that have been placed near them. When one of these towns experiences a shock, the other feels it at the same instant. During my residence in Arabia, there were several earthquakes, of which some were violent. On one of these occasions, a little town in the mountains, six leagues to the east of Mocha, was completely overthrown. The shocks were felt at Mocha; and though not very strong, they were sufficiently so to make me apprehend, that the house in which I lived would tumble upon my head. I accordingly quitted it in haste: the land when I got out was firm, but my boat, which was at anchor on the water's edge, was still in vibration, and for a moment two or three strong waves were raised, though it was a profound calm. Fahrenheit's thermometer was at 100, and the barometers at 27. If we may judge of the depth of the subterraneous abyss under the foundations of Arabia by its effects, we must suppose it to be enormous; for enormous must be

the conflagration necessary to produce an explosion capable of moving such vast masses. Earthquakes are of frequent occurrence in the mountains, particularly in the neighbourhood of Aden. The internal fire appears to be general, as it has not yet settled at any focus; it is probable, however, that it will in time make itself a passage by opening a volcano, which will give vent to the explosions, and thus put the other parts of the country into safety. At present these are all in continual danger of being swallowed up in some of the subterraneous caverns, the vaults of which, increasing the fire by confining it, may at last be unable to resist its force. This country indeed has always been subject to the effects of an internal conflagration, which appears to have produced in it great revolutions. A whole group of islands, anciently so famous that we know even the names of the towns in the largest of them, has totally disappeared. I refer to the islands which bore the name of Panchaia,

Inquiries respecting the Island of Panchaia.

Diodorus * says, that the Island of Panchaia was situated to the south of Arabia Felix, that there was a temple of Jupiter there, of which he gives a magnificent description, and four towns, Hiracia, Dalis, Oceanis, and Panara. The existence of the latter is so well confirmed, that we know its inhabitants to have consisted of Indians, Scythians, and even Cretans: these towns are no where to be found. Even supposing Socotara to have been one of them, what can have become of the rest? They cannot have been united to the continent by the retreat of the sea. There are two reasons that militate against this supposition. For, in the first place, were this the case, there would undoubtedly be some remains of that celebrated temple mentioned by Evemerus, which covered two acres of ground, and was built with free-stone, of a whiteness and polish equal to marble; we should certainly

* Diod. Bibliot. Hist. lib. 5 et lib. 6, preserved by Eusebius. Præpar. Evang. lib. 2.

see something of the navigable river so near its source; we should find traces of the four towns which Diodorus has mentioned by name. There is indeed on the coast of Africa the town of Zeila, at the extremity of the gulf so called; but neither its name nor its situation gives any mark of its being one of those belonging to the Island of Panchaia. But even supposing it to be one of them, the question respecting the other is still undetermined; and these are monuments which could not have decayed, without leaving some ruins to attest their existence. Evemerus says, that the temple of Jupiter was situated upon a hill. Supposing therefore the towns to have been buried in the sands of Africa, the situation of the temple and the hill would surely preserve them from a similar fate.

The second reason against considering these islands as having become a constituent part of the continent, is drawn from the principles of hydrostatics. The Isth-

mus of Suez had certainly emerged from the ocean before the Island of Panchaia had disappeared, for Evemerus was acquainted with it, and this author was contemporary with the second success of Alexander. However shallow might be the strait which separated this island from the continent, it is evident, that the plains which form the bottom of it were of a much lower level than the ground which composed the isthmus, since the latter was dry when the former was overflowed. Now it is known that the isthmus is the lowest land, the least elevated above the surface of the sea, of any in this part of the globe. From the straits of Babelmandel to Cape Gardafuy the coast of Africa is composed of sandy downs, which lie extremely high; the coast towards the south is also high enough to see from it to the distance of five leagues without difficulty; which is a much greater elevation than that of the isthmus, and proves therefore a prior existence. If the Island of Panchaia had

been united to the continent, the structure of the country makes it evident that such union could only have taken place in these latitudes: which leads me to a reflexion upon the text. Diodorus says, that this island was situated to the south of Arabia Felix. Why has he not assigned its place to the north of Africa, which would have bordered upon it? It would seem natural, that he should name the continent which was the least distant. Considering this to be the sense of the passage, we must suppose, that the island was nearer to the coast of Arabia than to that of Africa. If such be the position which he meant to give it, every idea of its having been united to the continent must vanish, since a mere inspection of the coasts will manifest the physical impossibility of such an event. We do not find there a single plain; we find nothing indeed but high mountains, the feet of which are buried in the waves to an unfathomable depth. In what place then could the junction have been effected?

The system of the retreat of the sea defies the most inveterate scepticism; but, when treated with too much warmth of imagination, it may give birth to paradoxes without number. In the labyrinth of inquiries into which it may lead us, let us never lose the clue of hydrostatics, which alone will keep us clear of the errors constantly resulting from a spirit of systematising. When it is proved, that it is one of the essential properties of fluids to preserve themselves in a state of equilibrium, it necessary follows, that the ocean cannot have retired from one part of the globe, at the same time that another part which is higher, that is to say, more distant from the centre, is overwhelmed by it. It is in vain then that a philosophy, respectable in other points, would persuade us, that, when the first Hanno made the tour of Africa, half of this vast continent was under water, and especially the Cape of Good Hope. In vain would it assure us, that at that time no part of America existed but the tops of the moun-

tains: such assertions would tend rather to alienate us from the system, than make us partisans to it. It must first be proved, that Carthage, Eziongabar, or whatever place this Hanno departed from, was higher than the lands which are defined to have been at that time covered with water; it must be proved, that Phœnicia is higher not only than the Table Mountain, and the mountains called the Tiger Mountains, but also than all the interior parts of Africa, which are unexplored, but which appear, as far as a judgment can be formed of them at a distance, to be very lofty; it must be ascertained, that the plains of America, from the foot of the Andes and the Cordeliers to the shore of the sea, are of a lower level than that of Carthage, which this Hanno is said to have visited. Unless these proofs can be acquired, we are reading in the book of Nature without knowing the alphabet. In vain have I searched for testimonies in all the voyages that have been made in Africa, and followed, step by step, the authors who speak

of it; I always find the Isthmus of Suez in my way; and am obliged to infer from it, that, while this isthmus has existed, all the countries which are of a higher elevation must have existed also.

As a general rule, let us never compute the epochs of the first appearances of lands, but by their relative height above the surface of the sea; and when we find traces of the ocean in any part of the globe, and would know whether the period at which these countries first emerged from the water be within the reach of our chronology, let us refer to those countries to the history of which it extends, and their comparative elevation will determine the priority of their appearance; with the exception however of such lands as have been produced by volcanic explosions.

I cannot suppose, therefore, that the Panchaia Islands have been united to the coast of Asia, since the structure of the country does not admit of such a conjec-

ture: nor that they have been joined to Africa, because there is no vestige of them whatever, and because every part of this coast is higher than those places which were contemporary with them.

My opinion is, that this archipelago has disappeared in consequence of some volcanic revolution. The innumerable rocks by which Zeila is encompassed, and which are a great obstruction to navigation, are evidently the effects of some violent commotion: even Zeila itself does not stand perfectly firm on its foundation, but often totters from the action of the fire that is under it. Thus the face of the country, the frequent earthquakes evincing the constant existence of an internal conflagration, the crater of Gebelthor still smoking, all tend to confirm me in the opinion, that these islands have been sunk in the abyss made by the fire beneath their foundations, and that they carried with them into the whirlpool part of the surrounding country, particularly the spot between So-

cotara and the continent, which is now under water. This space abounds with small islands, which are visibly the tops of eminences, preserved by their elevation from being inundated. Socotara or Zocotara, at the period when Evemerus and the Phœnicians navigated in these climates, I suppose to have been the most distinguished promontory of this part of the african coast. If it had been at that time detached from the continent, it would have been too considerable an island not to be noticed; its extent, its height, its mountains of granite contrasted with the downs of sand which answer to it in Africa, its pleasing and verdant aspect, its fertility compared with the burning sands from which it is separated only by a narrow strait, would have obtained it a place in the narratives of the earliest travellers.

From the arguments I have stated, it may be inferred, that there exists under the whole of this country an immense volcanic cavity, the fire of which has

continued for a number of centuries, and which, if it does not make for itself an opening by which to vent its efforts, will one day, and that perhaps at no very distant period, produce in this part of the world some extraordinary event, by which the boldness of our conjectures, concerning the vestiges of such revolutions as have preceded us, will be justified.

To return to my voyage.

Departure from Mocha.

The commercial speculation which brought me to Mocha turned out unfortunately: corn had a bad sale there, and the produce of my cargo was not sufficient to enable me to re-load my vessel with coffee. I contented myself therefore with buying two hundred bales of that article at Bethelfakih; I filled the hold of my vessel with salt, and purchased twenty of the larger sort of asses and two camels, which, with the necessary stock of water and provisions for

them, made up the freight. As I had not casks enough for the water, I was obliged to supply their place by wells (*puits*) constructed by the awkward workmen of the country: but these leaked in the voyage; and if my cattle had not been of the most temperate description, as those of this climate generally are, they would half of them have perished with thirst. While speaking of my quadrupeds, I shall mention one circumstance that struck me as curious, which is, that the asses, from the moment they were put on board, continued perfectly mute through the whole voyage.

Having made all the preparations for my departure in good time, and the first winds of the northerly monsoon beginning to be felt during the two or three last days of May, I began my voyage on the first of June. This precipitation however I had reason to repent; and I owe it as a caution to those who may come after me to say, that it is prudent not to sail till

the monsoon is steadily set in, as they will otherwise be exposed to the same difficulties to which I was subjected.

I had weighed about six in the evening, and when I arrived at the straits it was two in the morning. As the darkness prevented me from clearing them, I cast anchor at a short distance, and remained till daylight, when the wind changed and kept me there three days. On the fourth I sailed again, and was obliged, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, to repass the straits and return into the Red Sea, where I lay at anchor two days longer, at the end of which I set sail once more, but did not get much forwarder than before. I was five-and-twenty days struggling against the currents and keeping myself from the coast of Africa, which I had thus, against my inclination, the leisure of examining as far as Cape Gardafuy. When we were carried too close to the land by the calms and the currents, if, in the coolness of the night, a slight breeze

from the land reached the vessel, the heat which it brought with it was so great, that we were obliged to shut our eyes, though it had seemingly time to cool by passing through a space of three leagues over the surface of the sea.

Storm. On the twenty-sixth day I was attacked by one of the most violent tempests I ever experienced; the second day of its continuance brought me in sight of Socotara, and if I had had to contend with the wind and sea together we must certainly have perished; but, fortunately, the wind blew from the south-west, and carried us in the right course, which diminished the force of the tempest. My vessel too at this time felt the effects of the damage it had received in the Ganges; for in no other way can I account for the accident that happened to her.

One of the joints of the keel opened, and suddenly occasioned a leak, which, during the violence of the storm, was so

great, that, though four pumps were constantly at work, and the rest of the crew employed in emptying the water with buckets through the scuttles, it gained so considerably upon us, that when the wind began to abate we had no less than five feet and a half of water in the hold: a condition the more dreadful, as it showed us the gradual approach of a fate which all our efforts could not avoid. I had prepared my pistols, intending by means of them to rid myself of the misery of so cruel a death, and an ineffectual struggling with the waves. To increase the horror of our situation, two of the pumps broke at once, and the furniture of the third failed us. I had nothing with which to supply its place, and if the accident had happened twenty-four hours sooner, it is probable that nothing could have saved us. By good luck the storm abated, and the vessel being less strained, the leak made but two-and-thirty inches in an hour. It was still such, however, as not to be kept under by less than two pumps;

and it was therefore indispensably necessary to repair one of them. I shall enter here into a few details for the instruction of such seamen into whose hands my book may fall.

The pumps work by two valves, one fixed upon a moveable body called the upper box, containing a hole which this valve hermetically closes, and the other fixed to an immoveable body called the lower box. The upper box, in descending, presses the column of water upon the valve of the lower box, and keeps it shut, while the same pressure raises the valve of the upper box, and gives a passage through it to the water. In the re-ascent of the upper box, when its valve shuts by the weight of the column of water above it, that of the lower box opens and affords a passage to the water below it, which is thus drawn up by the suction. It thus appears, that the effect of the pump depends on the operation of the valves, and that without valves it could not be worked.

These, however, we had lost; yet I contrived notwithstanding to put my pumps into a condition for working. I had to find the means of supplying the loss of the valves, and to substitute something which would answer their purpose; that of completely stopping the holes of both the boxes, agreeably to the action of the pump. To effect this, I heated two four-pound shot, and applied them red-hot to the mouths of the valves, where I let them burn the wood so as to bury themselves half-way in it; I then cooled them, and without any other preparation put them into the pump. Their weight did not prevent them from giving way to the water, as much as was necessary, both in the ascent and descent of the upper box; and these two motions acting successively upon them, brought them back to their position in the holes which they had burnt, and which of course they exactly filled. By this contrivance the pump worked as well as ever.

After thirteen days of fatigue and trouble, I came in sight of the coast of Malabar. My crew now became refractory, and threatened to run the vessel aground, being determined not to expose themselves to the danger of a longer voyage. It was with great difficulty I prevailed upon them to accompany me as far as Pondicherry, where our labours would end. When we reached this place we were all in a miserable state, exhausted with weakness and fatigue. I received all the assistance that could be given me, and began to unload my cargo, which had suffered by the accidents of the passage. I had lost a camel and ten asses; the rest soon recovered their strength, and I sent them by another vessel to the Isle of France, and had mine repaired in the river of Coringui. The entrance of this river was difficult for so large a ship, but luckily the bar consisted only of soft mud, through which I made a passage with the help of my capstan.

At the time of my arrival in this river, the country was afflicted by a most cruel famine; the inhabitants died with such dreadful rapidity, that they could not be buried. The roads and fields were strewed with dead bodies, which had made this province the country of jackals and birds of prey: this was a disgusting spectacle, and it was out of the power of the government to remedy it. Famine.

The conduct of the people during the continuance of this destructive calamity was marked with a resignation and fortitude, that prove how compatible the contempt of death is with the utmost gentleness of manners. The granaries of the rich were full of corn; the poorer sort knew this, yet suffered themselves to perish, without attempting to make themselves masters of it. The manner in which they waited for death and submitted to it, appears, from its singularity, to be worthy of record. Though my pencil shrinks from the delineation, I will nevertheless

attempt it, that a faithful portrait may be given of the character of the natives of India.

As soon as an individual of either sex found, that all his efforts to prolong existence were in vain, he caused himself to be carried to the door of some rich man, in whose sight he wished to expire, as if to reproach him for not having extended to him from his hoard the relief, which would have saved him from death. There, lying upon the ground, and receiving from his friends a pot of water, sufficient to maintain him for two or three days, with his head wrapped in his apron, he waited patiently for the fatal moment, defending himself to his last breath against the animals that attempted to devour him alive, while no exhortations, on the part of those who offered to succour him, could induce him to accept the means, which, in his own opinion, were useless, for preserving a life he had resolved to sacrifice. Those whom some remains of

strength deceived with the hopes of a longer existence, and who were surprised by death, fell indiscriminately wherever it seized upon them. I was seldom without the distressing spectacle, every morning, of three or four bodies of persons who had died in this manner during the night. The fortitude of the Indians endured to the last moment: they saw death approaching, waited for it, and submitted to the stroke without a murmur or complaint, without having engaged in any seditious tumults, without having offered even the smallest violence to those whose affluence protected them from a similar fate, and died, calling upon Brama, their last hours unimbittered by a single sentiment of malevolence.

But enough of these gloomy images.

The road of Coringui is the wintering place to which vessels retire that are obliged to pass the bad season on the coast of India. The worst that can happen to

them in this situation is to be aground upon the mud banks, which is not attended with the slightest risk. Shipwrecks nevertheless are frequent in these parts, which arises from the sandy point that defends the bay to the south, projecting considerably into the sea, with dangerous ridges and shelves.

Nautical details.

During my stay in this place, a vessel struck suddenly in the night against this point and was lost. I sent out my boats and crew to her assistance, and many articles were saved, among which was some rice in a sack. The water had affected it, and the grains had swelled and were burst; yet, so great was the scarcity in this place, that it sold at the rate of six rupees the sack, which is fifteen livres for a hundred and fifty pounds weight. Mr. Dineur, the supercargo, testified his gratitude by making me an offer of an elegant boat, which I refused to accept as a present, but which I agreed to purchase of him. He wished me to take it at a price

much below its value, but what I had done required no recompense: in a case of this nature, all seamen are brothers, and ought to assist each other to the utmost of their power.

As I did not find at Coringui the necessary materials for repairing my ship's bottom, I could not have her properly careened, and was obliged to run her ashore, and have her put upon the stocks. It is in this business that the industry of the Indians shines forth in all its splendour: by their patience and perseverance, they effect, with the assistance of no tackling, no pulleys, no ropes, no capstan, no mechanical force of any sort, what we are unable to perform without the aid of many, the most powerful, means combined. Labour costs them so little, that the expense of it is scarcely an object of attention. The pay of a workman is a *dabou* per day; so that for a rupee of the value of about fifty sous, or two shillings sterling, the labour of eighty men may be

obtained. What is more extraordinary, this trivial pay is sufficient, in an ordinary year, for the maintenance of an Indian and his whole family.

Their method of raising a vessel is simple and ingenious. The details into which I shall enter upon this subject will be found perhaps insipid to many of my readers; but those who have a pleasure in contemplating the progress of the human mind will not be offended, though I should be a little tedious in dwelling upon particulars, which will furnish a comparison between nations yet young in existence, and those whom luxury and the arts have advanced to the height of civilisation.

They begin by fixing upon the spot in the meadow where the vessel is to be placed, and this being done, they dig a bason there, which they call *goudi*. When the bason is deep enough to contain the vessel, they admit water into it from the river, by piercing a little dike which has

been made at its entrance. As this country, however, is not yet hardened and dry, but has water a little below its surface, as soon as they have dug to the depth of two or three feet, their trench is overflowed: in this situation, without a pump or any machine whatever, with nothing but a bucket, they clear it as completely as could be done with all the assistance of hydraulics. This method of baling out water is not confined to maritime operations; they use it likewise in watering their fields, when they have not an opportunity of establishing a *picote* *.

The bucket they employ for this purpose is flat, and has four handles, to which are fastened as many ropes, the ends of which are held by four men, two on each side. Though the bucket is flat, it has a sort of hollow on one side, which we shall call the back; the front, on the contrary, is in the form of a shovel, or rather, to

* An instrument for drawing water resembling that of our gardeners and bricklayers.—T.

speak more intelligibly, the implement itself is a sort of hollow shovel. Two cords are fastened to the handles at the corners of the front, and two others to the back. The greater is the depth of the bason, the further do the men who work the bucket stand from the point to which the water is to be thrown. Their distance from this object ought to be equal to the depth, since the basket in its motion describes the arc of a circle, of which the ropes are the radii, and the men the centre.

To understand the operation of this implement, which is more worthy of attention as it supplies the place of a pump, let us figure to ourselves the situation of the right-hand man. In his left hand he holds the rope fastened to the front of the basket, and in his right that of the back (the man on the left holds them in the contrary hands). He begins by swinging the basket: after which, lengthening out the ropes, he lets it down so as to touch the water, and then with a slight effort of his left hand forces the

front of the basket below the surface, and thus fills it. In completing the arc of a circle, it reaches the height to which it is to be raised, when by the rope in his right hand he depresses the back of it, and the water runs out. The basket descends in the same direction, fills again in returning, and empties itself in the same manner. It is easy to conceive, that the motion is quick, and, if the bucket be of any size, that the exercise must be very fatiguing. I estimated this contrivance to be equal in its effect to a pump four inches in diameter in the tube, and worked by eight men.

With the help of this bucket, they keep their bason dry, till they have dug a sufficient depth to float a ship when filled by the water at high tide. They then open the bason when the tide is down, by raising the little dike which defends the entrance of it. The vessel then enters it without difficulty at the return of the tide,

and as soon as it is in, they stop up the mouth of the bason, by replacing the dike which they had removed: and thus their vessel is afloat, inclosed in a bason dug in the middle of a field.

An european engineer would think that as yet little was done, and would consider the rest of the operation as the greatest difficulty. The Indians, on the contrary, have performed the most laborious part of their work, and make no account of the remainder. Their basket has still to make a great figure, and by means of two of these instruments they fill the bason to the brim in a day at most. The vessel rises with the water, and when the *goudi* is full, they bring earth and raise a bank round the vessel, still filling with their baskets as they go on. They might thus lift their vessel to the clouds, if they were to employ a sufficient quantity of earth; but they seldom raise it more than ten feet. When it has attained the necessary height, they fill the

goudi with earth, by which the water rises above the banks and runs off, and the vessel is entrenched in a soft earth, which yields to its shape. When the water is cleared, they make the holes at the bottom of the bank, to drain the mould on which the vessel rests thoroughly dry; and in this state they leave it for six weeks or two months, till they judge the earth to have acquired a sufficient solidity. They then dig round the vessel, placing the requisite supports and stocks; and finish the whole by taking away all the earth they have brought, which leaves the vessel raised upon the ground, and in a situation to allow all the necessary repairs to be done to her bottom. This method of proceeding is the more ingenious, as it neither requires extraordinary exertion of strength, nor is exposed to accidents: the only inconvenience attending it is its slowness, which however is but a slight disadvantage in a country, where the vessels are prevented by the monsoons from making more than one voyage in a year.

Return to the Isle of France.

Such was the mode to which I was obliged to resort to in repairing my ship, and which detained me till January. I then returned to Pondicherry, whence I sailed to the Isle of France, and thus finished my voyage.

THE END.

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ERRATA.

Vol. I. p. 147, line 10, for *Jagrenat* read *Jagernaut.*
Vol. II. — 76, —— 20, and elsewhere, for *Gates* read *Gauts.*
285, (note) for *bricklayers* read *brickmakers.*
286, line 10, and following paragraph, for *basket* read *bucket.*

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